

Ex-militants set up party in Gaza

GAZA (R) — Former members of the militant Islamic Jihad organisation in Gaza on Friday launched a new Palestinian political party which favours "preserving stability in the self-rule areas," founders said. The Palestinian Islamic Front (PIF) is the second Islamic group to be set up in self-ruled Gaza in two weeks with the blessing of the Palestinian self-rule authority. PIF founders dodged questions on whether they would participate in all bodies of the Palestinian Authority. "Tighten the ranks, maintain stability in the borders of the Palestinian Authority, encourage dialogue between the active forces to reach common denominators," said founder Ayyesh Abdul Aal when asked about the objectives of his group. He said the 1993 agreement which launched Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho "did not restore rights to their (Palestinian) owners and did not lift injustice (from the Palestinian people)." Earlier this month, former activists of Hamas, which also violently opposes the peace agreement, set up a political party with funding from the Palestinian Authority.

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King's speech signalled a change but not 'total shift'

Jordan will remain a window on Iraq and Iraqi people

Albright: No early lifting of sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The Security Council is far from lifting sanctions on Iraq despite Baghdad's latest disclosures on its secret weapons programmes including a plan to produce a nuclear weapon by April 1991, the U.S. ambassador said Friday.

"Iraq launched a crash programme to deploy a nuclear device before the Gulf war and their target date was April 1991," U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright said after an oral report to the council by the head of the U.N. commission on Iraqi disarmament.

She said Iraq's latest revelations said more about its low credibility and the threat it still poses than about the chance for an end to sanctions.

"It is important to tell the truth, because once you begin fabricating lies, it is very hard to remember what you lied about, and you create new lies and you lose all your credibility," she said. "For Iraq to regain its credibility, it has a very long way to go."

The U.N. commission in charge of Baghdad's disarmament, led by Rolf Ekeus, must certify that Iraq has complied with U.N. requirements on its weapons programmes before the international sanctions can be dropped.

Mr. Ekeus, who just returned from a trip to Baghdad, also said the Iraqis disclosed that they had produced more bacteriological agents than they had previously acknowledged.

They also had a comprehensive programme to produce and deploy 200 biological warheads that could be delivered by long-range missiles and aircraft, he said.

The Security Council was next due to review the sanctions on Baghdad about Sept. 9, but no change was expected at that time, according to Western diplomats.

Ms. Albright said Mr. Ekeus told the council Iraq had produced and deployed some 200 fully-capable biological warheads for delivery by air and long-range missiles but backed off shortly before the Gulf war because of a warning by the United States.

He also told the council it had produced additional biological agents beyond those previously disclosed, she said.

Iraq has been hoping its latest disclosures would lead to a lifting of the debilitating oil embargo and trade restrictions, imposed by the United Nations after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Following the briefing, Ms. Albright said the United States has enough support within the Security Council to block any attempt to eliminate the punitive measures. The United States also can veto any council action.

"We just received a chilling briefing," Ms. Albright said. "These latest disclosures from Baghdad say much more about the credibility of the Iraqi government and the threat it still poses than they do about the possibility of lifting sanctions any time soon."

Meanwhile, U.S. troops tested tanks at their desert camp in Kuwait on Friday while ships began sailing up the Gulf with material for 16,500 Marines amid moves to deter any possible threat from Iraq.

By Nermeen Murad
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein's address to the nation on Wednesday did signal a shift in Jordanian policy towards Iraq, but it was not the "total shift" under which Jordan was expected to take an active part in efforts to topple the Iraqi regime, Jordanian politicians and analysts say.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, in a statement he made to German television on Thursday, stressed that Jordan would continue to maintain official contacts with Iraq and remain an open window for Iraq and the Iraqi people.

"We have been reminded by the recent defections to Jordan of a senior Iraqi official of the pivotal role of Jordan in the region; and when I say we have been reminded, I think that the world has been reminded of the fact that Jordan is an open window on Iraq and on the Iraqi people," the Crown Prince said.

"As far as official relations are concerned, obviously these are maintained," he added. "Despite the difficulties and the respective embarrassment, we noticed that His Majesty's statement

of yesterday was relayed in full by the Iraqi media."

The Crown Prince's statement, coupled with official government assurances that Jordan would not pursue active measures against the Iraqi regime, strongly indicate that a final break between Jordan and Iraq has not happened, as many Western and Arab politicians and observers actually believe.

"Our relationship with Iraq has not changed," an official government source told the Jordan Times yesterday in commenting on the King's speech. "But that does not mean that we are not hoping for an improvement in the situation in Iraq," the source said. "Jordan will not close any door in pursuit of its major policy objective, that of alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people through lifting the sanctions regime."

"While it is true that the King's speech did not at any time call for a change in our relationship with Iraq, whether it be on the economic or the human level," the source said, "it is also true that His Majesty stressed his concern for the Iraqi people without calling for the ouster of President Saddam."

In his speech, which he made on Jordan Television,

the King expressed his deep disappointment with the Iraqi regime's systematic resistance to any advice or action that would pave the way for its rehabilitation, and he warned that the world was not going to lift the five-year old embargo against Baghdad any time soon.

But despite this disappointment, the King stressed that Jordan will not close its borders to Iraq or block food and medicine supplies to the Iraqi people.

"This in no way amounts to a call for the toppling of the Iraqi regime," the government source said.

Observers agree that the King's speech did not indicate a "practical shift" in the Kingdom's handling of its day-to-day relations with Iraq even though it contained what some of them described as "until now suppressed criticism of the Iraqi regime."

Ibrahim Izzeddin, a former minister of information and of state, says that while there was "a shift" in Jordan's policy vis-a-vis Iraq, "I do not think it will be translated into specific steps to be taken regarding daily relations between Iraq and Jordan."

"This rather unique position is further demonstrated

(Continued on page 7)

Pelletreau trip aimed at supporting Jordan, not anti-Saddam bid -- U.S.

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The State Department acting spokesman, John Dinger, Thursday emphasised that a recent trip to the Middle East by two senior U.S. officials sought enhanced support for Jordan, not the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

front-page New York Times article about the just-concluded trip to the region by Robert Pelletreau, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, and Mark Parris, special assistant to the president for national security affairs, "was based on an incorrect assumption," Mr. Dinger said.

The article asserted that "the diplomatic mission has failed" in an effort to weaken or topple the Iraqi government in the wake of the defections to Jordan of two senior Iraqi military officials — both sons-in-law of Saddam Hussein.

"That article is based on an incorrect assumption that the purpose of the trip by Mr. Pelletreau and Mr. Parris was

to overthrow Saddam" the acting spokesman stressed. Mr. Pelletreau and Mr. Parris "went to the region because we considered it vital, in the wake of recent developments, to have an authoritative, first-hand exchange with regional partners," he explained.

They found all their contacts "extremely useful and encouraging," and their meetings in the region "revealed a remarkable degree of consensus on the potential significance of Hussein Kamel's defection and on other recent signs of turmoil and internal strain in Iraq," Mr. Dinger said.

General Hussein Kamel had been in charge of developing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction before the Gulf war and of military and industrial production since.

"In each of their stops, Mr. Pelletreau and Mr. Parris found agreement on the root causes of the turmoil inside of Iraq and on the responsibility of the Saddam Hussein regime for the continuing suffer-

ing of Iraq's people," he said.

The acting spokesman declined to provide details of the discussions conducted by Mr. Pelletreau and Mr. Parris, but he did say that "we are convinced that recent events have created a basis for reconciliation and closer cooperation among key U.S. partners in the region which did not exist a few weeks ago."

On their trip, the two officials met with senior government leaders in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and then made a brief stop in Jordan again before returning to Washington.

"The recent meetings and the parties' public statements make us believe we will see more rapprochement between these and other countries in the period ahead," Mr. Dinger said. "We're entirely satisfied with the results of this trip. We're certain we will be able to work effectively with our friends in the region as a result of it. This is

(Continued on page 7)

Baghdad says Hussein Kamel urged invasion of Kuwait and S. Arabia

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Iraqi government on Thursday dismissed accusations that it had planned to invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and claimed that Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan, the Iraqi defector who made the charges, was lone in making these suggestions before his defection to Jordan this month.

The dismissal, broadcast by state-run Iraqi Television late Thursday, was Baghdad's first reaction to a critical speech by His Majesty King Hussein in which he lent weight to statements made by Gen. Hassan concerning the plans.

In "This is the Truth" programme broadcast by Iraqi Television, a text of which was released by the Iraqi embassy in Amman, the television announcer broadcast a recording which he described as the voice of Gen. Hassan addressing the

border with Iraq. The forces were later withdrawn when the U.S. rushed military forces to the region.

In his 45-minute speech to the nation on Wednesday, the King sharply criticised the Iraqi government, but he did not mention President Saddam by name.

The King clarified that he had heard from Gen. Hassan that the Iraqi leader had contemplated plans to reinstate Kuwait as well as Saudi Arabia. "It is enough to say that the mere thought of such action and the probability of its execution constitutes a horrible catastrophe for the Arab Nation," said the King.

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(Continued on page 7)

Mubarak offers asylum to Saddam

CAIRO (Agencies) — President Hosni Mubarak was quoted Friday as saying he was prepared to grant asylum to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein — or Iraqi opposition figures — if it would contribute to ending the country's turmoil.

He also repeated his rejection of the use of outside force to remove President Saddam or any Arab leader, saying that this was an internal matter for each country.

He made the remarks Thursday in an interview with the London-based Al Hayat newspaper. The interview is to be published Saturday.

Mr. Mubarak told the paper he was willing to take President Saddam in as a political refugee "if this means a solution to the problem of the Iraqi people and would prevent a blood-bath in Iraq."

There has been no indication President Saddam is seeking to relinquish power in Iraq or to leave his homeland.

But questions about the stability of the regime have been raised by the defection of two of President Saddam's sons-in-law, including a former defence minister Hussein Kamel Hassan.

Asked if Egypt would give asylum to Gen. Hassan, who defected from Iraq earlier this month, Mr. Mubarak said: "Egypt accepts any Arab politician as a refugee on condition he doesn't get involved in politics."

He noted, however, that Gen. Hassan had been given asylum in Jordan "so the issue is over."

However, he said, the defection was "still a puzzle."

Mr. Mubarak said the first

(Continued on page 7)

Kuwaiti deputies welcome King's speech

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Legislators Friday hailed moves by Jordan to distance itself from the Iraqi regime, a development that could speed up reconciliation between Kuwait and Jordan after a split triggered by the 1990 Gulf crisis.

In a major speech Wednesday, His Majesty King Hussein blamed the Iraqi regime for Iraq's suffering and accused Iraq of repeatedly deceiving him and splitting the Arab World.

"The King's speech has an important positive aspect in that it condemns the invasion" of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990, independent legislator Ahmad Al Nassar told the Al Qabas daily.

He said the Monarch's speech fitted with the policies of Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which also comprises Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.

Mr. Nassar criticised the King's depiction of Iraqi defector Hussein Kamel Hassan as a hero, he said, however, the speech was "a step in the right direction that coincides with our intention of further isolating Iraqi regime."

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An Iraqi taxi driver loads new tyres on the top of his car in a parking lot for Iraqi taxis in Amman. Iraqi drivers buy Jordanian products to resell them in Iraq (AFP photo)

Jordanians split over economic impact of possible strain in ties

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians appeared divided on Friday over the impact of a possible strain in Jordanian-Iraqi ties on economic and trade links between the two neighbours, while the government said it did not foresee any sweeping negative effect on the relationship after the critical speech delivered by His

Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday.

However, there was agreement that any freeze in trade and economic links between Jordan and Iraq could seriously affect Jordan. Any move along such a line from Iraq could come only if Baghdad is assured that it has an alternative outlet to the outside world, but that does not seem an immediate possibility, given the closure of Iraq's

borders for regular flow of traffic and goods along all its other borders.

The argument is not limited to economic analysts, millionaire businessmen and officials. Almost everyone, from a small grocer to large supermarket owners, are also worried over the possible consequences on the Jordanian economy of a suspension

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Parliamentarians view Iraq developments on party lines

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Parliamentarians on Friday reacted to His Majesty King Hussein's national address largely in accordance with party lines. While mainstream senators and deputies offered their full backing and voiced their satisfaction with what His Majesty had to say about the situation in Iraq, the parliamentary opposition believed the speech signalled a shift in the Kingdom's poli-

cies which could have dire consequences in the long-term.

In a cable he sent to the King on Thursday, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament (Senate) Ahmad Lawzi said the Senate strongly supports the Kingdom's efforts to end inter-Arab differences and establish future relations on mutual respect and confidence and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs.

"The Senate voices its pride in your national stands

and supports your national address that defined and stressed the Jordanian constant principles... you enjoy the people's full support," Mr. Lawzi wrote.

Senator Ahmad Akaleh expressed satisfaction at the timing and content of the address that "had put an end to the confusion" which had resulted from the defection of Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan to Jordan.

"The King's speech put the

(Continued on page 7)

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More surprises seen in Iraq nuclear data

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iraq's new disclosures about its weapons of mass destruction are likely to reveal nuclear arms data beyond findings of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which closed most of its files a year ago.

According to diplomats and other sources, Iraq's crash programme to build a bomb was more advanced than suspected. Some related equipment may still be missing and some scientists may have continued theoretical work well after the 1991 Gulf war, they said.

The Vienna-based IAEA has issued frequent positive reports, saying it had a complete overview of the programmes.

Iraq had claimed all pertinent documents and materials on weapons of mass destruction had been destroyed as ordered by the U.N. Security Council after the 1991 Gulf war.

But on Sunday, it gave U.N. disarmament experts more than 147 boxes of documents on paper, video tapes, computer disks and microfiche that are now sealed in a U.N.-protected centre in Baghdad, where arms officials expect to analyse the data.

The U.N. Special Commission, headed by Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekeus and responsible for riding Iraq of its chemical, biological and long-range ballistic missiles, has revealed some crucial information on its new findings.

However, the IAEA, in charge of destroying nuclear weapons, was briefed separately by Iraqi officials and has so far been silent.

Sources familiar with the disclosures said Iraq had a far more active nuclear weapons programme than originally thought in its aim to produce its first atomic bomb, believed to be less than a year away before the Gulf war began.

Iraq, they said, indicated it had more centrifuge equipment, used to enrich uranium for a bomb, than admitted earlier. Some of the equipment may not have been destroyed.

There was also evidence that Iraq continued theoretical work for designing bombs well after the 1991 war. While computer models are not explicitly prohibited by Security Council resolutions, their existence has to be reported.

In its Security Council reports, the IAEA said it was "confident that the essential components of Iraq's past clandestine nuclear programme have been identified and have been destroyed, removed or rendered harmless, as appropriate."

Officials from the Special Commission were also astounded by the scope of Iraq's efforts to produce germ weapons and ballistic missiles, although Dr. Ekeus had previously reported his suspicions on biological agents and weapons to carry them.

"They claim all has been destroyed," said Charles Duelfer, the commission's deputy chairman. "Our task is to verify that. Some of it is buried in holes and we are going to dig up the holes and look for bits and pieces."

Dr. Ekeus and other officials said Iraq has now admitted:

— Germ or toxin-filled munitions, bombs and missiles ready for use during the war against Israel or Saudi Arabia or U.S.-led troops.

— Five different sites, rather than one, for producing biological agents, such as anthrax bacteria, botulinum toxin as well as another mycotoxin from a fungus, an ingredient in the "yellow rain" that Iraq used in the 1980s.

— A capability of producing its own engines for Scuds and other ballistic missiles.

Arrests in Hebron

Israeli soldiers lead three blindfolded Palestinians held on suspicion of anti-Israeli activities, in Hebron. Israeli soldiers on Friday shot dead two Palestinians, who, the Israeli army said, were wanted activists of Hamas (see page 12) (AFP photo)



Rabbani soldiers push back Taliban

KABUL (R) — The Afghan government said on Friday its forces had pushed the Taliban student militia's defensive lines almost 40 kilometres across the southwestern plains of Afghanistan.

President Burhanuddin Rabbani's defence spokesman, known only as Dr. Abdullah, said pro-Rabbani fighters launched their attack on the Taliban's western-most stronghold of Delaram last Wednesday.

"We are now shelling the town of Girisikh in Helmand province. If we can capture Girisikh, we will be well placed to launch an attack on the borders of Kandahar," he said.

Kandahar is the Taliban's headquarters and an attack on it would be a major blow to the student militia's morale, Western sources said.

Dr. Abdullah said Defence Ministry strategists were convinced that if they did target the southern city, former fighters still living in Kandahar would support the attack with an internal rebellion.

"Already the Taliban are demoralised," Dr. Abdullah said. "We have killed 50 of their fighters and captured about 100 along with 12 tanks, 12 Z-U anti-aircraft guns, and loads of light weapons."

He said 10 pro-Rabbani fighters were killed and 20 wounded by the Taliban.

There was no independent confirmation of the fighting. Taliban sources confirmed losing some ground, but said the situation was not as desperate as stated by Dr. Abdullah.

Dr. Abdullah said pro-Rabbani fighters had also seized the initiative in another fight 30 kilometres east of Kabul.

Fighting was also going on with the oldest military rival, the Hezb-e-Islami faction of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, which had launched an offensive on positions around the strategically important town of Sorobe, Dr. Abdullah said.

By late Thursday evening, pro-Rabbani forces were within four or five kilometres of the main Hezb-e-Islami bases and using artillery and tanks to shell the opposition fighters there, he added.

"We have also captured Tizin and Jaji, two villages around Sorobe, so Hekmatyar can't resupply the base anymore," Dr. Abdullah said.

Japanese troops to join Golan Height observers

TOKYO (R) — Japan will send troops to the Middle East for the first time in its history next year as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Golan Heights, a Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) spokesman said on Friday.

After months of deliberations, the executive board of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's socialists approved the plan on Friday to send Japanese army troops to the Golan Heights to replace a Canadian transport unit, the spokesman said.

Details of next February's dispatch will be formally announced at a cabinet meeting next Tuesday, he said.

The plan has been pushed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), senior partners in Mr. Murayama's coalition government.

The Socialist Party had been blocking it on grounds that it could violate the country's controversial 1992 Peacekeeping Operations Act, which does not allow

Japanese troops to be used in "combat" roles, such as separating warring factions.

Under a draft plan approved by the socialists on Friday, Japanese troops will take on a limited transport role in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).

Japanese troops will not transport weapons or ammunition for troops of other countries, and will retain the right to withdraw at any time on orders from Tokyo, rather than of UN-DOF, the draft plan said.

Mr. Murayama is expected to inform leaders of Middle East countries of the plan next month when he tours the region. Although details have not been announced, Japanese media said he will visit Israel, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia from Sept. 12 to 18.

During the 1990-91 Gulf war, Japan came under severe international criticism for not dispatching troops to the region, substituting lack

of military contribution by contributing aid.

After the war, Japan sent a flotilla of minesweepers but this did not impress its allies, especially the United States.

As a result, the conservative LDP government at the time pushed through the controversial Peacekeeping Operations Act in 1992, overcoming strong pacifist opposition, especially from the socialists. The two are now in an uneasy alliance under Mr. Murayama along with the smaller conservative Sakigake Party.

Under the 1947 constitution, Japan's armed forces, called the Self-Defence Forces, have been restricted to a purely defensive role, hence Japan's hesitation in sending troops abroad under any pretext.

It would be Japan's fourth such contribution to U.N. peacekeeping and refugee aid programme since 1992, after Cambodia, Mozambique and Rwanda.

Mastermind of blasts sought revenge for house demolition

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

BALATA REFUGEE CAMP — Abdul Nasr Issa, accused of masterminding a ring of suicide bombers, is a hero to his sisters who say he was justified in getting revenge for the army's destruction of the family home. But Issa's father disagrees.

"Anyone who kills civilians is not a hero," said Attallah Issa, 61, who tried to locate his son and persuade him to abandon his commitment to Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement that has tried to wreck the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy plan.

In interviews Thursday, the divided family reflects the schisms within the Palestinian community about the attacks, which have claimed 90 lives and wounded hundreds while Israel and the PLO were negotiating peace.

"I don't condemn what my brother did," said Abdul Nasr's sister Tamam, 28, an English literature teacher. She said Israeli generals were treated as heroes for killing Palestinians "so we consider him a hero."

Samar Issa, 34, a housewife who like her younger sister wears the "mandil" headscarf of an observant

Muslim woman, said her brother's actions were an outgrowth of the way the Issa family and other Palestinians have been treated during Israel's 27-year occupation of the West Bank.

Army bulldozers tore down the family house during the Palestinian uprising in 1989 after Abdul Nasr was convicted of throwing fire-bombs at Israeli soldiers.

Only 50 metres down the narrow curving alley of the refugee camp are the stone starts that once led to the family's first home, several times larger than the existing three room house where a dozen family members now live.

"What do you expect from my brother after his house was demolished and Israelis were making problems for the Palestinians. This is a strong motive for such action," said Samar, 34.

Abdul Nasr, arrested Saturday, was accused of sending suicide bombers to attack a bus in Tel Aviv on July 24 which seven people were killed and Monday's attack on two Jerusalem buses in which five people died.

He was described by the Shin Bet secret service as a disciple of Yahya Ayyash,

the "engineer," a chemist who built some of the bombs for suicide attacks and trained people like Abdul Nasr to build more.

Until his disappearance, Abdul Nasr, 27, was the head of the 1,000-member Islamic bloc at Al Najah University in nearby Nablus where he studied Islamic law. He had been on the run from Israeli authorities since December and his father went after him, checking out rumours that he had fled to the PLO-run autonomous areas in the Gaza Strip and West Bank region of Jericho.

"I tried to reach him. I tried to make contact. I didn't want him to join Hamas, and I told him all the time to leave Hamas, but he didn't listen," said Attallah.

"I argued with him several times that this struggle is bigger than you, and he should think realistically."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Manila to apologise to UAE for flag burning

MANILA (AFP) — Philippine Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon said here Friday that he would apologise to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the burning of a UAE flag by an ex-cop-turned activist. Mr. Siazon, in an interview aired by private radio station DZRH, said that while the burning of flags was a common sign of protest in the Philippines, it was considered a serious insult in other countries. Mr. Siazon was apparently hoping to assuage any anger against the Philippines that might affect the verdict in the retrial of a 16-year-old Filipino maid who risks the death penalty for stabbing her employer to death in the Gulf state. The verdict in the retrial of Sarah Balabagan, who was sentenced to seven years in jail on June 24, for the murder of her employer, is scheduled for Saturday. Ms. Balabagan has said she killed her employer after he raped her. UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan cancelled the verdict and ordered a retrial. A lawyer for Ms. Balabagan was also quoted by DZRH as saying that the burning of the flag endangered their case. Abner Afuang, a former policeman who has taken to staging various public protests for different causes, set fire to the flags of five countries, including the UAE, last month, to protest against abuses of Filipinos working in those countries.

S. Korea defence minister to visit Israel

SEOUL (R) — South Korean Defence Minister Lee Yang-ho was headed for Israel on Friday for talks with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on bilateral military cooperation. Mr. Lee and Mr. Rabin, who holds Israel's defence portfolio, were to discuss ways to improve defence industry cooperation and exchanges of military personnel and information. The Aug. 25-31 visit will be the first to Israel by a South Korean defence minister since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1962.

Yemen holds 2 Swedish police officers

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Two Swedish police officers are being prevented from leaving the Yemeni capital of Sanaa after the authorities there confiscated their passports. The Swedish Foreign Ministry said late Thursday. The officers, a man and a woman, arrived in Sanaa on Aug. 14 as escorts to an Iraqi family of four who had been expelled from Sweden. The private TV 4 television station quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying Stockholm had received no explanation from the Yemeni authorities for their action. "According to our information the expulsion of the Iraqi family took place in accordance with international regulations," spokesman Staffan Bjoerck said, adding that Sanaa had also refused to accept the Iraqis, who had previously lived in Yemen. Mr. Bjoerck said that a Swedish diplomat from the embassy in Riyadh, Leif Ringquist, had gone to Yemen to try to secure the restitution of the police officers' passports and the acceptance of the Iraqis. Meanwhile, the officers were being housed in the Swedish consulate in Sanaa, the spokesman said.

U.S. ships enter Gulf with material for Marines

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Ships carrying enough tanks and other equipment for 16,500 U.S. Marines sailed up the Gulf on Friday to deter any possible threat from Iraq, a U.S. Navy spokesman in the region said. Three of the ships were in the south or central Gulf and the fourth was due to enter the waterway in the next two days after sailing from the Indian Ocean base at Diego Garcia, the spokesman told AFP by telephone. "Each ship has a little slice of everything. Jeeps, tanks, guns, food," he said. "If there were a crisis such as Iraq threatening to invade Kuwait, the Marines would be flown in from the United States and they'll meet up with their equipment on the beach," he said. The U.S. aircraft independence was also en route to the Gulf from Japan and expected to enter the Gulf in September to replace the Abraham Lincoln, which has been ordered to stay put as a precaution.

'Germany expels two Iranian diplomats'

NICOSIA (AFP) — Germany has expelled two Iranian diplomats for "spying." Iran's main armed opposition group, Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, said Friday. "The German government has expelled two members of the Iranian embassy," the group said in a statement received by AFP in Nicosia without giving the date of the expulsions. The foreign ministry in Bonn contacted by AFP refused to make any comment, and in Tehran ministry officials could not be reached as Friday is a holiday in Iran. The Mujahadeen statement named Ali Osouli, based in Bonn, saying he "has received orders to leave the country for violating international diplomatic protocols." It charged that Mr. Osouli was "an agent of (Iran's) Ministry of Intelligence who worked... on the third floor of the regime's embassy in Bonn." "The other agent" ordered to leave is Seyed Jalal Abbasi, who worked in the regime's consulate in Frankfurt for two years and was in charge of spying against the members and supporters of the Iranian resistance, the statement said. Mr. Osouli has been the embassy's third secretary since November 1992, but the other diplomat was not on Bonn's diplomatic list.

Turkish troops kill 15 Kurdish rebels

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish troops killed 15 Kurdish separatist rebels in clashes in the southeast Anatolia region of the country, the semi-official Anatolian news agency said Friday. The operations took place in the province of Diyarbakir, capital of the Anatolia region populated mainly by Kurds, according to a communique from the police headquarters in Diyarbakir. The communique did not say when the fighting occurred, but the Turkish army carries out daily sweeps against the banned Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in the region.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Back to the Future
14:30 Harry and the Hendersons
15:00 Road to Avonlea
15:45 Only in Hollywood
16:00 Families
17:00 Children's programme — Rahan
17:30 Doc... Palettes
18:00 Drama — Operation Open
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Paul Pas Revier
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 First Flights
20:00 Major Dad
20:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15 Dr. Quinn-Medicine Woman
22:00 News in English
22:25 Film: Mother of the Bride
23:20 Noble House

PRAYER TIMES

04:00 Fair
06:02 (Sunrise) Doha
12:37 Dhur
16:15 'Asr
19:13 Maghreb
20:35 'Isa

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate-sunny weather with temperatures around 28-30°C. Windy and northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 18 / 32
Aqaba 27 / 37
Dessir 16 / 34
Jordan Valley 26 / 37

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 31, Aqaba 37 Humidity
readings: Amman 35 per cent.
Aqaba 32 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Dr. Walid Al Masri 675485
Dr. Yousef Rasheed 896301
Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikh 734008
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 636762
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Shamsi pharmacy 657660
Najib pharmacy 847632

ZARQA:
Dr. Tareq Hijawi 985444
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192-621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53230

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushter Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/57
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641546
Italian, Al-Mushter 775111/26
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 891611/5
Army, Marika 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674153
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)963323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999900
RIBDI:
Princess Sumia Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Dr Al Nofes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by

Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel: (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
06:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
06:15 Aqaba (RJ)
06:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
06:35 Beirut (RJ)
06:40 New Delhi (RJ)
06:45 Colombo (RJ)
06:50 Doha (RJ)
06:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:00 Istanbul (RJ)
07:05 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)
07:10 London, Berlin (RJ)
07:15 Vienna (RJ)
07:20 Madrid (RJ)
07:25 Athens (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:20 Vienna (OS)
11:10 Damascus (AZ)
13:40 Sharjah, Doha (GF)
15:10 Rome (AZ)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
21:40 Paris, Damascus (AF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:40 Beirut (RJ)
06:50 Aqaba (RJ)
07:05 Rome, Madrid (add) (RJ)
07:10 Vienna (RJ)
07:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
07:20 Istanbul (RJ)
07:25 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
07:30 Paris (RJ)
07:35 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)
07:40 Brussels, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:45 Beirut (RJ)
07:50 London (RJ)
07:55 Rome, Madrid (add) (RJ)
08:00 Athens (RJ)
08:05 Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
08:10 Jeddah (RJ)
08:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
08:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

08:45 Beirut (ME)
13:00 Rome (AZ)
14:30 Vienna (OS)
21:25 Bahrain (GF)
22:20 Damascus, Paris (AF)
22:50 Amsterdam (KL)
01:25 London (KL)
04:35 Antalya (TK)
01:00 Sanaa (add) (Y)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:30 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700 / 500
Banana 600 / 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 120 / 80
Carrot 320 / 230
Cauliflower 330 / 250
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 280 / 200
Eggplant 200 / 100
Figs 350 / 280
Garlic 750 / 600
Grapes 680 / 500
Lemon 450 / 300
Marrow (large) 600 / 450
Marrow (small) 380 / 250
Mushrooms 120 / 80
Okra 750 / 500
Onion (dry) 230 / 150
Orange 480 / 280
Peaches 200 / 100
Pepper (hot) 200 / 100
Pepper (sweet) 200 / 100
Potato 280 / 200
String Beans 280 / 200
Sweet Melon 280 / 180
Tomato 140 / 100
Water Melon 180 / 100

Rwandan refugee repatriation from Zaire makes slow start

KIBUMBA CAMP, Zaire (R) — A U.N. voluntary repatriation operation to Rwanda got off to a slow start in Zaire Friday with only small numbers of refugees leaving for their homeland.

At Kibumba camp, with 200,000 residents the largest in the Goma region of eastern Zaire, only 87 Rwandan refugees — mostly women and children — boarded U.N. trucks on Friday morning.

"Everyone's waiting for everyone else to go. It's a slow start. People need security assurances," Ivan Sturm, a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) repatriation officer, told Reuters.

Hundreds of young men stood by the main road and watched the 87 board three U.N. trucks and set off for the border.

The young men told journalists they would not return to Rwanda despite UNHCR Friday resuming voluntary repatriation which was suspended Saturday when Zaire started mass deportations.

Many of the estimated one million Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire fear being killed on return in re-

prisal for last year's genocide in Rwanda of up to a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

After expelling some 15,000 Rwandans and Burundians, Zaire signalled Thursday it was satisfied with a UNHCR offer to transform the deportations by the Zairean army into voluntary repatriations.

U.N. officials said they had the capacity to truck 5,000 people daily to Rwanda, where they would be put in transit camps for screening by Rwandan authorities, intent on catching any former troops or militiamen involved in the genocide.

"If we go back to Rwanda, all young men will be killed immediately," said Moussa Izziya, a young refugee, at Kibumba.

Those who boarded the trucks said they wanted to go home because they were not wanted in Zaire any more.

"I'm a clever man. I always listen to the radio. That is why I'm going back. I make my own decisions," said 28-year-old Jean-Baptiste Rwanika as he clambered aboard a truck with his few belongings.

"I heard the Zairean soldiers are no longer grabbing people. Zaire has given us time to go home with UNHCR. We have to follow that decision otherwise they will kick us out," he added.

In nearby Kitale camp UNHCR officials said about 100 people volunteered to go. They said the trucks would wait until noon (1000 GMT) Friday and would return Monday to Kibumba and Kitale.

They said the trucks would go to Mugunga and Lac Vert camps northwest of Goma Saturday to collect any refugees who wanted to go.

U.N. officials said they had expected a slow start to voluntary repatriation but stressed the key element had been Zaire's decision to suspend the forced expulsions Thursday.

Kibumba camp leader Jean-Baptiste Sibomana estimated that about 50,000 people may go back but said he himself would not before refugee leaders struck a power-sharing agreement with the government in Kigali and a new national army was formed.

"That which I fled is still

there in Rwanda," he said. Tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees returned from the mountains to camps in eastern Zaire Friday after Zairean troops stopped expulsions, U.N. officials said.

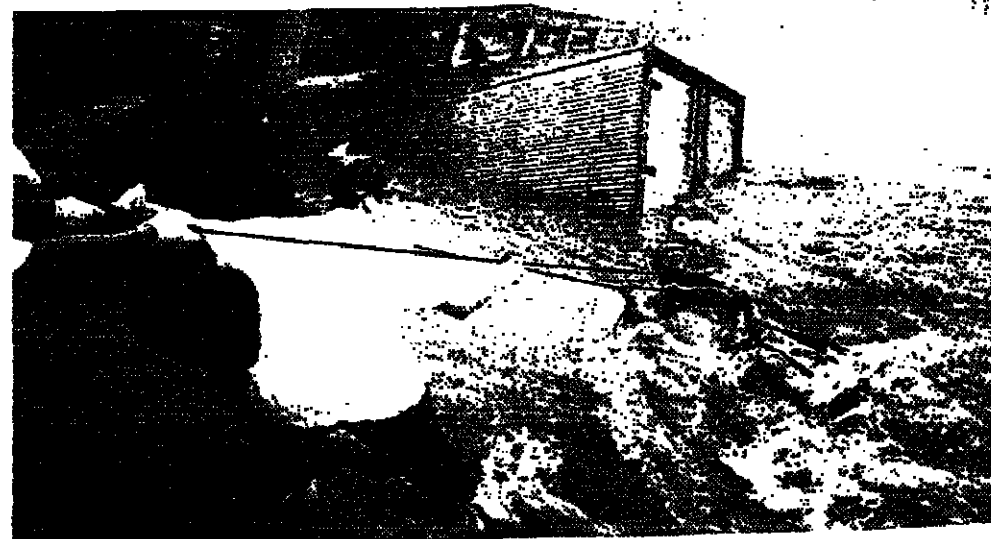
Toni Stadler, head of the U.N. refugee agency's office in Uvira south of Rwanda's northwestern border with Zaire, told Reuters by telephone about half of an estimated 100,000 refugees who fled this week had returned to nearby camps as of Friday.

In the Zairean border town of Bukavu, north of Uvira, U.N. refugee agency representative Patrick De Sousa said a U.N. voluntary repatriation programme for Rwandan refugees would start in his region Monday.

"There is a ferment among refugees for returning en masse."

We'd like to accelerate this process and use the momentum," he said by telephone.

He said refugees did not want to return in small groups. "They want to go back in groups of 2,000 to 3,000. I'd like to use the next three days to build up a group of 3,000 to be taken home," he added.



Passers-by haul a truck-driver to safety from Seoul's Han River after he was swept away from the vehicle as torrential rains spawned by typhoon Janis sent the river pouring over

riverside drives. At least 37 people were killed or missing as torrential rains have unleashed landslides, derailed a train and cut roads and bridges (AFP photo).

S. Korea hit by typhoon-spawned rains; 37 killed or missing

SEOUL (AFP) — At least 37 people were killed or missing as torrential rains spawned by typhoon Janis pounded South Korea Friday, unleashing landslides, derailling a train and cutting roads and bridges.

The seventh typhoon of this year threatens to trigger the worst floods in five years here when it hits central South Korea Saturday afternoon, Home Ministry officials said.

The highest casualties were inflicted near Yongju City, 130 kilometres southeast of Seoul, where five people were killed and 16 others missing after landslides swept away 24 houses, television reports said.

In Kongju City, 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of Seoul, nine people were killed when another landslide buried two houses.

A train carrying 500 passengers derailed in Kwangju County, 100 kilometres (60 miles) southeast of Seoul, killing one person, injuring 160 and leaving eight reported missing, Yonhap Television News said.

The accident occurred

when a section of a bridge, weakened by a rain-swollen stream, caved in, sending eight cars of the 11-car train toppling off the track.

A 38-year-old railroad vendor was confirmed dead and eight others were seen falling into the stream.

About 300 rescue workers were rushed to the site but were hampered by the driving rains and the rushing stream.

The central and eastern parts of the country have been battered by pouring rains brought on by typhoon Janis since Wednesday, with some areas receiving more than 40 centimetres (12 inches) of rain in the past 24 hours.

Five railroad lines, including the main Seoul-Pusan artery, were paralysed and many sections of roads and bridges were washed away or submerged.

Flood warnings were replaced by flood alarms for low lying areas around the Han River flowing through this capital and the Han's tributaries, forcing thousands of residents to evacuate to higher land.

AFP reporters said river-

side roads and low level bridges were closed, awash with muddy water, spilled over from the Han, whose water level surpassed 9.5 metres (28 feet) and came close to the alarm level of 10.5 metres (34 feet) late Friday.

The tops of street lamps of riverside football fields and parking lots could barely be seen above the water's surface.

A 500-tonne barge on the Han broke loose from its mooring and hit the piers of Mapo Bridge, prompting police to bar traffic from the bridge for a while.

Heavy rain warnings were also issued for the central area of the country, including this capital and its surrounding Kyonggi Province, as weathermen predicted more rains of between 10 and 50 centimetres (four to 20 inches) until Sunday.

The typhoon, with a central air pressure of 992 hectopascals and a wind speed of 23 metres per second at its centre, was described as relatively weak but was picking up speed as it moved northwest.

Japan's Hashimoto leads in party race

TOKYO (R) — Trade Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, riding a wave of popularity after settling a car war with the United States, is leading the race to become head of Japan's largest political party, a newspaper survey showed Friday.

It said Mr. Hashimoto appears to have already secured enough votes to become head of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), seen as a stepping stone to the Japanese premiership.

The daily Yomiuri Shimbun's survey of LDP factions said Mr. Hashimoto already had the backing of 160 of the party's 310 parliament members in the Sept. 22 contest against Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, the current LDP president. The LDP is the biggest partner in Japan's three-party coalition.

Mr. Hashimoto, 58, one of Japan's most popular politicians, is also leading among the LDP's 1.5 million card-carrying members by a wide margin, the Yomiuri said.

In the vote, every 10,000 ballots by party members count as one cast by an LDP member of parliament.

The new LDP president would be a top contender to succeed Tomiichi Murayama as prime minister, because one of the country's two biggest parties, the LDP or the opposition Shinshinto (New Front Party), would most likely form the next government.

Mr. Hashimoto's victory could destabilise, but not break apart, the Murayama government. Socialist Secretary-General Wataru Kubo said in an interview published Friday.

"If one of the three pillars in the current coalition must leave it, then this will have an impact on the political situation," Mr. Kubo told the Sankei Shimbun. Mr. Kono has been the cornerstone of Mr. Murayama's three-way coalition, which includes the LDP, the Socialists and the small Sakigake Party.

Both Mr. Kono and Mr. Hashimoto have vowed to support Mr. Murayama, whatever the results of the LDP vote. But parts of Mr. Hashimoto's election platform contradict policies of the coalition.

Mr. Hashimoto has always figured high in popularity polls for future prime minister. Since the late 1980s, he has served in key posts including LDP secretary-general and finance minister.

Mr. Hashimoto has seen his popularity soar since June, when he settled a heated car trade dispute with the United States, averting what would have been a damaging trade war.

In contrast to Mr. Hashimoto, Mr. Kono has suffered from his party's defeat in upper house polls in July.

The LDP finished second behind the opposition Shinshinto in the proportional representation part of the vote, the first time it had been anything but the most popular party.

Brush fire burns out of control in New York

EASTPORT, New York (AP) — A fast-moving brush fire along the route to the fashionable Hamptons Beach resort towns burned seven homes Thursday and forced the evacuation of 250 people.

A lumber yard and the Westhampton commuter railroad station were destroyed, according to media reports. No serious injuries were reported.

The 5,000-acre (2,000-hectare) fire was the second out-of-control brush fire to burn on Long Island this week, after an unusually dry summer.

The fire began in the wooded area near the Eastport campus of Suffolk Community College and the Suffolk County Airport, said Southampton Police Capt. Anthony Tenaglia.

Authorities closed some roads including parts of the Sunrise Highway, the main road to the island's east end where the rich and famous of New York City have posh summer homes. Those homes weren't immediately threatened.

The Long Island railroad suspended train service to Montauk east of Speonk.

The fire jumped the Sunrise Highway between Eastport and Westhampton and continued in a south-southeast direction, eating its way through heavy underbrush Capt. Tenaglia said.

President Bill Clinton ordered James Lee Witt, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to go to New York to manage the firefighting effort.

Yeltsin, reappearing in public, tackles crime

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin Friday reappeared in public for the first time since last week and said rampant crime was threatening national security.

Mr. Yeltsin made the comments in a speech to senior Interior Ministry officials at which television cameras and Russian news agencies were present.

"Crime has become a real threat to the national security of Russia," Interfax News Agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying. The Russian leader outlined a six-point programme to fight crime and said the ministry had to be reorganised to meet the task.

The 64-year-old president, who did not show up as scheduled to open an airshow near Moscow Tuesday, has not been seen in public all week. Reporters last saw him attending an ice hockey match on Aug. 15.

The president's airshow no-show fuelled speculation that Mr. Yeltsin, who spent a month in hospital and in a sanatorium after a mild heart attack on the night of July 10, was again ill or unable to work.

Presidential aides said Mr. Yeltsin chaired a meeting on the fate of the rouble Thursday.

Quebec independence battle is close — poll

TORONTO (R) — Quebec voters are almost evenly split on whether their French-speaking province should separate from Canada, according to a poll released Friday ahead of a Quebec referendum expected this autumn.

The poll by Groupe Leger Leger found that among 1,003 Quebecers had a margin of error of plus or minus three per cent. The poll was conducted for the Toronto Globe and Mail newspaper and Le Journal De Montreal.

They were asked: "If a referendum were being held today, would you vote for or against the sovereignty of Quebec with an offer of economic and political partnership with Canada?"

Quebec separatist Premier Jacques Parizeau has said he will announce a referendum date within two weeks. He has said it will occur between late October and mid-November.

Mr. Parizeau has been telling Quebecers that if they vote for separation, Quebec will seek to negotiate close economic and perhaps even

political ties with the rest of Canada.

Among all poll respondents, 45.3 per cent said they would vote no to sovereignty, with 44.4 per cent voting yes and 10.3 per cent saying they did not know or refusing to answer.

The results were similar to those of the previous Leger Leger poll in June, which among decided voters, found opponents of separation leading supporters by 51.5 per cent to 48.5 per cent.

Respondents in the June poll were asked whether they would support Quebec sovereignty "with an offer of an economic association with the rest of Canada."

In the latest poll, Francophones, who comprised 83.2 per cent of the sample, favoured separation by 49.8 per cent to 40.3 per cent. Seven per cent were undecided and three per cent refused to answer.

Only 18 per cent of non-Francophone respondents backed sovereignty, versus 70.1 per cent against.

The poll also found a gender gap, with separation supported by 50.8 per cent of men and by only 38.4 per cent of women.

Quebeckers rejected sovereignty by 60 per cent to 40 per cent in a 1980 referendum.

Mystery bomber hits Finnish police station

HELSINKI (R) — A car bomb attack on police offices in the Finnish capital overnight wounded a police officer and damaged the building, but police said Friday they had no immediate suspects for the raid.

Chief investigator Anti Turkama said the city-centre bomb, concealed in a reddish-brown private car, appeared to have been deliberately aimed against a nearby building housing several departments of the Helsinki Police.

"The likely target was the police... and in that sense the whole of organised society," Mr. Turkama said, adding that about 100 police were investigating but so far had no leads.

"We have no information about suspects," he told a news conference.

An anonymous caller who said he represented a Finnish nationalist group, the Finnish People's Internal Liberation Front, told Finnish media his organisation was responsible for the bombing.

Police said they had not heard of the group, which appears to demand the return to Finland of the Karelia region, ceded to neighbouring Russia as part of a settlement at the end of World War II.

Sonia Gandhi's public outburst stings India's ruling Congress Party

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling Congress (I) Party, stung by a first-ever public outburst from Rajiv Gandhi's enigmatic widow, vowed Friday to speed up investigations into the assassination of the former prime minister.

Opposition MPs helped a rebel faction of the Congress to put Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's government on the mat in a debate in parliament and demanded action against those who staged Gandhi's May 21, 1991 assassination.

Commerce Minister P. Chidambaram, a close friend of the Gandhis, said a probe

into the murder would be completed within a "tight" time-frame, as the opposition ignored the day's business to back the rebel leaders on the issue.

"Everything possible is being done to see that the investigation is completed within a tight time-schedule," Mr. Chidambaram said, asserting that the former premier's widow had full confidence in him.

Speaker Shivraj Patil also came to the rescue of the Congress, which was stunned by the public attack on Mr. Rao's administration by Gandhi's Italian-born widow, Sonia, a day ago in the north-

ern state of Uttar Pradesh.

"We should do our best to book the culprits and punish them as per the law of the land expeditiously," Mr. Patil said in the legislature's 545-seat lower house.

In her first ever political speech, Sonia Gandhi told a 30,000-strong public meeting in her husband's old constituency of Amethi that Mr. Rao's government was going slow on the probe.

"Even four years and three months later, the investigation into Rajiv Gandhi's assassination is slow," Sonia Gandhi told her supporters in halting Hindi.

Thousands take matrimonial vows in Seoul wedding

SEOUL (R) — More than 35,000 couples from the Unification Church braved rain to exchange marriage vows Friday at South Korea's Olympic Stadium, promising to love and cherish church-ordained partners they had only just met.

"Yes, we met for the first time a few days ago," said smiling Kim Young-Hee, wearing her wedding dress and a white veil and arm-in-arm with her husband. "I am very happy."

Paired off in an earlier matchmaking ritual by Korean Evangelist Sun Myung Moon, the couples joined more than 325,000 other couples around the globe who were married by satellite in what was said to be the largest-ever mass wedding.

Rev. Moon, wearing a white and gold crown and draped in a flowing gold-edged white gown, presided at the wedding with his wife from a podium above the couples.

As in Rev. Moon's previous mass wedding in 1992, the stadium was packed with relatives and friends of the couples, who responded obediently to instructions to rise and sit.

"Do you as mature men and women who are to consummate the ideal creation of God, pledge to become eternal husband and wife?" Rev. Moon asked the crowd.

"Yes," responded the couples in Korean. After answering "yes" to two other questions, the couples, many weeping, exchanged identical wedding rings.

Called by followers "a parent of human kind," Rev.

Moon sprinkled holy water on some 20 couples closest to his podium.

Most of the grooms, wearing identical dark suits and ties, and brides were soaked wet from torrential rains that poured down on the main stadium from the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Floods and landslides from three days of rain had claimed at least 21 lives in South Korea as of Friday.

"The rain will not stop the ceremony," a church spokeswoman said before the ceremony. "Instead we will think of the rain as a direct sprinkling of holy water by God himself."

Many other newlyweds stood alone, clutching a photograph of overseas partners whom they have never seen.

"My husband is a Filipino and he couldn't come because he had no visa," said Japanese bride Naomi Kunitaka. "I have not met him but we had telephone conversations and letters."

"But I am very happy now. I will go to the Philippines to meet him," she told Reuters as the ceremony was about to end.

But she said she would not sleep with her new husband until after a church-mandated 40-day waiting period.

"After the blessing (the wedding ceremony) the couples spend a period of time, usually forty days, abstaining from sexual contact, and during this time each spouse prepares in a prayerful way for a pure new start to married life," said a church booklet entitled "Marriage, Family And World Peace."

Rev. Moon, a South Korean, founded the Unification Church in Seoul in 1954 with a theology loosely based on Christianity.



Couples wearing plastic raincoats over their wedding finery stand in serried ranks in driving rain at Seoul's Chamsil Olympic Stadium as they are married by Unification Church (Moonie) leader Moon Sun-Myong (AFP photo)

"Thank you," the couples shouted as Rev. Moon left the stadium and thousands of doves and multi-coloured balloons were released. Some wept as they waved their hands at Rev. Moon.

Rev. Moon, a South Korean, founded the Unification Church in Seoul in 1954 with a theology loosely based on Christianity.

His followers, often referred to disparagingly as "Moonies," say the church's goal is to build a kingdom of heaven on Earth and inspire people to follow the ideology of self-sacrifice.

The church, which says it has three million followers worldwide, performed its first mass wedding in 1961 with 35 couples involved.

Milk truck thief proves cream doesn't pay

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand police were confronted with a messy problem after a stolen milk truck collided with a baker's van in a scene reminiscent of slapstick comedy. Police said the truck was stolen as its driver was making a delivery about 3.30 a.m. A 19-year-old man jumped into the truck and drove around the street corner, straight into the bread van. "There was milk, cream, cheese, yoghurt, bread and crates spread all over the place," said Inspector Albie Wilson of Wellington Police. The truck driver led police on a sedate chase along a nearby motorway before he was apprehended and arrested on a charge of unlawfully taking a vehicle.

Unknown Presley recording offered for sale

LONDON (AP) — A previously unknown recording by Elvis Presley is part of a trove of memorabilia ranging from a white Rolls-Royce to firearms — to be auctioned in October. Bonhams auctioneers, which organised the sale with Butterfield and Butterfield of Los Angeles and San Francisco, said the recording was offered for sale by Dick Grob, formerly chief of security for the singer. Provisionally titled Let Me Make Believe Awhile, the recording is 78 rpm acetate that may have been made in Presley's home studio. The date has not been established. Bonhams estimated that the record will go for \$40,000 to \$60,000 in the sale, scheduled for Oct. 6-7 at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Times of London reported that the paper sleeve on the disc is inscribed: "To Dick, thanks. Elvis Presley." Other items listed for the sale include some of Priscilla Presley's birth-control pills, dark blue jockey shorts worn by the king, several firearms, an autographed book by Pat Boone and exercise equipment Presley used to strengthen his hands.

Jerry Garcia leaves most of estate to wife

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — The Grateful Dead's legendary guitarist Jerry Garcia left most of his estate to his widow, while his four daughters received much of the balance, according to court papers. Dollar amounts were not specified in Garcia's will, which was filed earlier this week in Marin County Superior Court, but the Dead were one of the highest grossing touring acts in the history of rock'n'roll. Since 1985, they grossed \$330 million from North American concerts, according to the weekly trade publication Pollstar. Their albums were steady, if unspectacular sellers, and Garcia sold artwork on the side. To his third wife Deborah Koons, whom he married on Valentine's Day last year, Garcia wrote, "I give my jewellery, clothing, household furniture and furnishings, personal automobiles, books, pictures, objects of art and other tangible articles of a personal nature." She also receives one-third of his money while the remaining two-thirds were willed equally to Heather Garcia Katz, 32, Annabelle Walker Garcia, 25, Theresa Adams Garcia, 10, and Keelin Garcia, 8. Smaller amounts go to Garcia's brother Clifford and to Sunshine May Walker Kesey, the daughter of former wife Carolyn Adams Garcia.

Butcher palms off pet pooch as lamb chops

COLOMBO (AP) — A butcher who killed his pet dog and palmed off the meat as lamb chops is being held in jail, police said Friday. The butcher, Mapatunage Chandrasa, bludgeoned the dog, then sold the meat to six customers for 100 rupees (\$2 per kilogramme (\$1 a pound), police said. Sri Lankans do not eat dog meat. The customers reported no illness, but became suspicious when they spotted the butcher's only lamp grazing in his garden at Panaluwa, 30 kilometres (18 miles) east of the capital, Colombo. Police later found some of the dog's remains in a well and arrested the butcher on charges of fraud. They were considering bringing other charges, an official said.

World News

Milk truck that proves cream doesn't pay

WELLINGTON (R) — A 19-year-old milk truck was seized after a stolen milk can scene reminiscent of a comedy. Police said the truck was stolen from a dairy farm in the north. A 19-year-old man, who was driving the truck, was arrested. The truck was found in a field near the city. The driver was charged with theft and possession of stolen goods.

Unknown Pres recording offered for sale

LONDON (AP) — A previously unknown recording of Elvis Presley is being offered for sale. The recording is said to be a live performance from the 1950s. It was discovered by a collector who found it in a box of old records. The recording is being offered for sale by a dealer in London. The dealer said the recording is in excellent condition and is a rare find. The recording is being offered for sale for a price of \$10,000.

Jerry Garcia leaves most of estate to wife

SAN FRANCISCO — The Grateful Dead's lead singer, Jerry Garcia, has left most of his estate to his wife, Loretta. Garcia died in 1995. His estate was valued at over \$100 million. Garcia's will named Loretta as the sole beneficiary of his estate. Garcia's family said Loretta is a devoted wife and mother. She has three children with Garcia. Garcia's estate is being managed by a law firm in San Francisco. The firm said it is working to settle Garcia's estate as quickly as possible.

Butchers palms off pet pooch as lamb chops

LOMBARD (AP) — A butcher in Lombard, Illinois, was charged with selling a pet dog as lamb chops. The butcher was caught by police who were investigating a complaint about a dog being sold. The butcher was charged with animal cruelty and selling meat that was not for human consumption. The butcher was released on bond. The case is being handled by the local prosecutor's office.



The skipper of the Greenpeace ship, the Rainbow Warrior, talks to the assembled press, as the ship arrives in Papeete (AFP photo)

French deliver warning letter to N. Zealand ship

AUCKLAND (Agencies) — Three French naval officers boarded New Zealand Navy ship Tui to deliver a warning letter hours after it arrived (Thursday GMT) off Mururoa Atoll where France is to resume nuclear testing next month.

"I have a letter for you from Vice-Admiral Philippe Evuete of the French Maritime Forces of the Pacific Zone. We will give this letter to all skippers arriving near Mururoa and Fangataua. This letter advises them what they can do and what they cannot," Lieutenant Yves Peant told the captain of the Tui.

Tui, an unarmed naval research vessel, is to monitor the safety of a growing protest fleet, likely to include about 25 ships, that will demonstrate at France's South Pacific nuclear test site.

Within hours of arriving outside the French-declared 22 kilometre (12 nautical mile) exclusion zone, Tui captain Lieutenant Commander John Campbell was radioed by the French.

Three officers from the French patrol boat Gracieuse were piped aboard and delivered the letter from Adm. Evuete.

The letter said the French Navy respected protesters' right to protest, but warned that protesters should respect the French right to protect the sovereignty of the atoll.

"I am quite determined to enforce the law and to carry out the mission I hold to safeguard the security of the testing sites in order to implement the decisions," of French President Jacques Chirac, the vice admiral said in the letter.

"I assure you that I will always act as a sailor should you encounter difficulties and that I would not hesitate to lend you assistance if necessary," Adm. Evuete said in the letter.

Li. Peant told the New Zealand captain the French wanted to have regular contact with the Tui — twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon.

The French naval officers left the Tui, declining to comment to the media, after 10 minutes.

Commander Campbell said the visit was a normal courtesy call between two navy ships.

"We're operating in their backyard... it's just general courtesy," he said.

In New Zealand, Greenpeace spokesman Michael Szabo said in a statement that the government had missed a "golden opportunity" to deliver an official protest letter to the French Navy.

"The government had previously said the Tui would not be meeting with the French Navy or Greenpeace and this seemed to contradict that undertaking," Mr. Szabo said.

He said it was inappropriate for the Tui, which "the government has sent... to represent the views of the New Zealanders," to "exchange niceties" with the French Navy without protesting France's nuclear testing programme.

Greenpeace's flagship Rainbow Warrior II left Papeete Harbour Thursday to join some of the "peace flotilla" protesting against President Jacques Chirac's decision to carry out up to eight nuclear tests at Mururoa and neighbouring Fangataua, from Sept. 1.

Another naval vessel, the Cook Islands Police Force patrol boat Te Kukupa is expected near Mururoa next week.

The skipper of Rainbow Warrior II said Thursday his crew would "go all out" to prevent the resumption of nuclear testing.

Veteran activist Jon Castle, who is returning to the Mururoa Atoll test site for a third time in 10 years, told Reuters shortly after setting sail from Tahiti that Greenpeace was committed to stopping the first of eight planned tests.

"We're going to try and stop the first one and we are going to go pretty well all out to stop it," Mr. Castle said as the ship rounded Tahiti's rugged west coast on its 1,200-kilometre (750 miles) voyage to Mururoa.

Fresh from Greenpeace's successful bid to stop shell oil dumping a disused oil rig in the North Sea, Mr. Castle dismissed a suggestion that Greenpeace would leave the French military to conduct the remaining seven tests unimpeded.

"We will be here all bloody year if possible," he said, adding that it would be impossible to keep the Rainbow Warrior off Mururoa for months on end because it was needed elsewhere.

"Our response would not always have to be a big ship. It might be a yacht or two," Mr. Castle said. Greenpeace yacht Vega is already off Mururoa.

Decorated with bunches of banana leaves and a single banner "stop testing," the Rainbow Warrior was seen off earlier from Papeete by a handful of anti-nuclear activists onshore.

The crowded vessel is carrying 37 people, including veteran campaigners like Mr. Castle and first-mate Derek Nicholls, who is banned from setting foot on French Polynesia after his arrest during a 1992 protest off Mururoa.

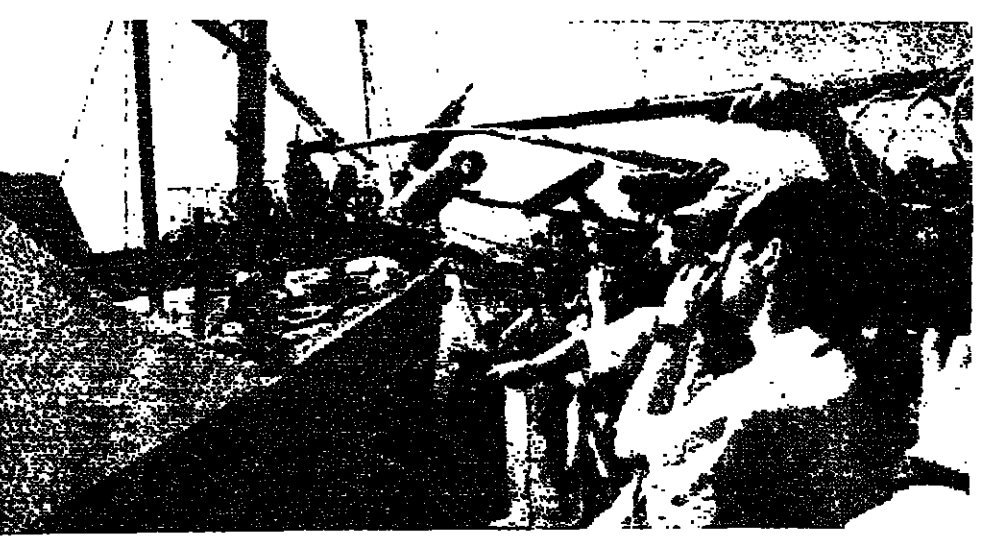
The Warrior was making steady headway in calm seas on Thursday and is due to take up a position off the atoll late Saturday and rendezvous with three other Greenpeace boats.

While the 65-metre three-masted ship will act as the flagship for 20 to 30 boats expected off Mururoa, campaign coordinator Stephanie Mills said it was not a Greenpeace flotilla.

"It has been a spontaneous happening in different countries, but as we did make an appeal for people to come out here, we will try and help coordinate the ships," Ms. Mills told Reuters.

Each afternoon yachts will be required to call in for the "peace flotilla schedule." "Yachts will simply report their position, weather and course," Ms. Mills said.

Most of the other ships in the flotilla are not expected to reach the atoll until at least Sept. 1 or 2.



Greenpeace campaigner Stephanie Mills talks to the press in Papeete, from the Rainbow Warrior as she arrives in Tahiti on a one-day stop en route from Fiji to the French nuclear test site at Mururoa Atoll (AFP photo)

China ends missile tests off Taiwan

BEIJING (Agencies) — China announced Friday it had ended a second series of military exercises off the Taiwanese coast that had triggered political unease and a stock market plunge in Taipei.

The official Xinhua News Agency, quoting an announcement by the Ministry of Communications, said the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had ended guided missile and artillery firing exercises in the East China Sea.

Shipping and air traffic could resume normal operations as from midnight Friday, it said.

The 10-day manoeuvres, which took place in an area some 150 kilometres (90 miles) off northwest Taiwan had followed a missile firing exercise in the same location between July 20-26.

Both exercises had been seen by analysts here as provocative reminders by Beijing that it has never renounced the use of military force against the Nationalist island, which it views as a breakaway province.

The exercises accompanied a vicious propaganda onslaught against the government in Taipei, sparked by the visit in June of Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to the United States.

According to the Taiwan Defence Ministry, the manoeuvres that ended Friday had involved air-to-ship, ship-to-air and ship-to-ship attacks using tactical guided missiles and heavy naval artillery.

During the July tests, China fired six missiles and claimed they all landed in their designated splash zone. Taiwan said only five missiles hit their target.

Despite appeals for calm by the Nationalist government in Taipei, both exercises created turmoil on the local stock exchange and generated great public anxiety over a possible invasion from the mainland.

Beijing has repeatedly stressed that it would react militarily if Taiwan moved towards outright independence — a process it accused Mr. Lee's U.S. visit as encouraging — or if the island was taken over by foreign forces.

Most Western observers agree that a straightforward military invasion of Taiwan, which boasts a more modern arsenal than the mainland, could only be achieved with enormous casualties to the PLA.

Consequently, a more likely scenario would be a naval blockade of the island, aimed at crippling its economy.

The Chinese government and media have maintained a series of relentless personal attacks on Mr. Lee in the past

two months, accusing him of attempting "to split the motherland," acting as a puppet of the United States and betraying the Chinese people.

The latest attack came Wednesday, with a Xinhua commentary broadcast on state-run television condemning Mr. Lee's decision to seek a second term of office in Taiwan's first-ever popular presidential elections next year.

There was no immediate reaction from Taipei to Beijing's decision. But on Thursday Taiwanese Defence Minister Chiang Chung-ling said China's exercises were "routine" and would not escalate tension across the Taiwan Strait.

Meanwhile China has told Japan it will conduct two more underground nuclear tests before a global nuclear test ban treaty is concluded next year, a Japanese daily reported Friday.

Quoting Japanese government sources, the Tokyo Shimbun reported that one of the two tests would be conducted this year at Lop Nor in the desert area of remote western Xinjiang, traditionally China's nuclear test site.

Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said they could not confirm the report.

"China does not usually give us prior information about its nuclear test plans,"

one official said.

China usually carries out tests between May and June and from September to October because of weather conditions.

Beijing has already carried out test blasts twice this year — last week, and in May — provoking angry protests from Japan and other countries.

This year's third test is likely to be carried out between late September and early October, thereby avoiding the Sept. 4-15 dates when Beijing hosts the U.N. fourth world conference on women, the Tokyo Shimbun said.

In a rare show of displeasure, Japan took the symbolic step of trimming grant aid to Japan shortly after it conducted the nuclear test in May.

Tokyo took a similar step after last week's test.

It has stopped short of slashing low-interest loans which account for the bulk of the financial aid provided to China, saying the aid has already been officially promised to Beijing.

China has said it will halt all tests after the international Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is signed, possibly in 1996.

Western diplomats and military analysts have said China wants to upgrade its nuclear arsenal before the test ban goes into effect.

Human rights activist Harry Wu speaks briefly to the press upon his arrival at his home in Milpitas, California. Mr. Wu, 58, a naturalised U.S. citizen, was expelled from China 66 days after authorities detained him as he entered the country and after he was convicted to spying and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and expulsion. Behind him is Jeff Fiedler, a senior member of the human rights organisation (AFP photo)

Chechen rebels seize building; Russians reinforce Gudermes

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A group of Chechen rebels has seized a building in Gudermes, the second biggest town in the separatist region, Russia's top military commander in Chechnya was quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency as saying Friday.

A similar act by another group of rebels in the town of Argun ended Monday in a bloody clash between the separatists and Russian troops. Russian reports say up to 80 fighters were killed.

Lieutenant-General Anatoly Romanov, who commands Russian troops in Chechnya, told TASS the rebel unit was headed by Sultan Geliskhanov, former head of Chechen security service under the region's separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Mr. Geliskhanov said Mr. Dudayev had appointed him military commandant of Gudermes, a town of 60,000 to the east of Grozny.

The commander of the rebel group which occupied a building in Argun also said he was acting on behalf of Mr. Dudayev. The incident in Argun nearly derailed the shaky peace process in Chechnya.

Russia has sent troop reinforcements to Gudermes to head off possible violence as the tentative peace process stumbles on, Interfax News Agency reported Friday.

Citing Russian army sources, it said Moscow wanted to avoid a clash similar to that in Argun.

The army did not say how many troops were being sent to Gudermes, Chechnya's second town, but they included a specialised "psychological warfare" unit.

The unit mainly composes

a radio team which has already begun broadcasting messages on loudspeakers urging Chechen fighters to surrender.

Chechen army chief of staff Aslan Mashkhadov said Wednesday that the clash in Argun was an act of "provocation" stage-managed by Russian security forces with the complicity of certain Chechen factions.

Meanwhile a delegation from the Russian Security Council, the Kremlin's top national security authority, arrived in Grozny to draw up proposals to settle the Chechen conflict before its next meeting, probably Wednesday.

That meeting could also formally endorse Oleg Lobov's nomination as Russian President Boris Yeltsin's representative in Chechnya, although there has been no official confirmation of his appointment.

However Russian Deputy Vladimir Lyenko emerged from a meeting with Mr. Yeltsin Thursday to say he had been told Mr. Lobov had just been appointed by presidential decree.

Mr. Lobov "will clear things up and coordinate all activities in Chechnya," Interfax quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying after an Interior Ministry meeting.

The job is regarded as a key political position in the Caucasus but he will also be able to keep his post as secretary of the influential Russian Security Council.

Mr. Yeltsin said Mr. Lobov "will be obliged to stay in Chechnya for maybe a year but in any case at least until the elections" in the republic which Moscow in-

tends holding in early 1996.

Mr. Lobov's appointment to such a key position is a significant move in Russian policies toward Chechnya and marks the culmination of weeks of manoeuvring in Mr. Yeltsin's entourage.

He is considered to have been a main force behind Russian troops marching into the republic on Dec. 11 to quell a three-year-old independence drive there, sparking off eight months of bitter fighting.

His apparent main rival was Arkady Volsky who, as chief negotiator with the Russian team, signed a military accord and ceasefire with Chechen separatists to end the conflict.

However Mr. Volsky was considered more inclined to compromise and was criticised for being too soft.

Mr. Lobov, 57, has been a close ally of Mr. Yeltsin for 30 years, sharing top party roles in Sverdlovsk, in the Urals, in the early 70s and helping to oversee the rebuilding of Armenia after the earthquake of December 1988.

He remained loyal to Mr. Yeltsin during the abortive coup of August 1991 and was named secretary to the Security Council, one of Russia's most secretive bodies, in 1993.

Meanwhile Mr. Dudayev has told his rebels they should not immediately hand in their weapons as agreed under a deal with Russia because some aspects of the accord could lead to tragedy, a local journalist said Friday.

The journalist told Reuters by telephone that the soundtrack of Mr. Dudayev's speech was broadcast on

Chechen television in the capital Grozny Thursday night, cutting into a programme shown by Russian Television. "Weapons should not be surrendered," Mr. Dudayev was quoted as saying.

"There are aspects to this agreement which could turn into a tragedy for the Chechen people," the journalist quoted Mr. Dudayev as saying. Mr. Dudayev was speaking in Chechen.

The rebel leader, now hiding in the southern mountains, said he had endorsed the military agreement to avoid being accused of opposing peace. The deal was signed on July 30 by top Chechen military commander Aslan Mashkhadov.

Mr. Dudayev, in typically flamboyant remarks, said the war against Moscow could be continued outside Chechnya. He has made the same threat several times.

Fighters from Chechnya took four officers prisoner in an attack on Border Guards in the neighbouring Russian Republic of Dagestan Friday and a fierce gunbattle lasting several hours ensued, Interfax News Agency reported.

Citing sources in the area, Interfax said the Border Guards were deployed near Lake Gutlib and the villages of Botlikh and Andi, a few kilometres from Chechnya's southeastern Veden district.

Border Guards were trying to free the kidnapped officers and destroy the Chechen group, Interfax said.

The Russian military command in Chechnya also said four Interior Ministry troops and four federal army troops were wounded in overnight attacks by Chechen fighters.

U.K. eases N. Ireland prisoners' terms for peace

BELFAST (R) — Britain eased jail terms for hundreds of Northern Ireland guerrillas Friday in hopes of breaking the deadlock in a year-old diplomatic drive to reach a lasting settlement to the province's 25-year sectarian conflict.

Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew announced easier remission terms and a promise to review emergency laws and the role of the controversial

police force just days before the first anniversary of a landmark IRA guerrilla truce.

The move was seen as a significant easing of British government policy towards some 1,000 IRA Republicans and Protestant "loyalists" in British jails and an attempt to keep an Anglo-Irish peace initiative on track at a critical stage.

But it fell far short of the total amnesty sought by the

IRA.

"This is certainly no amnesty — but it is both significant and real," Sir Patrick said in an address to university academics in Belfast.

He said prisoners jailed since 1989 would become eligible for remission after serving half of their sentence rather than the present two-thirds, a move which could free 100 Republican and loyalist convicts.

"Another 300 would ultimately benefit from the change. It would, in very tangible terms, be of real benefit to the developing peace," Sir Patrick said.

Yet Sir Patrick signalled little real change to the government's demand that Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, get the guerrillas to make "substantial progress" towards handing over their weapons so as to win a seat at new all-party peace talks.

China expels 2 Hong Kong journalists for spying

BEIJING (R) — China expelled two Hong Kong reporters Friday after charging the pair with military espionage, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Reporter Wat Wing-Yin and Photographer Tse Qu Yingyan of Hong Kong's outspoken Next magazine entered the coastal area of eastern Fujian province on Aug. 18 disguised as tourists to obtain military secrets "surprisingly," Xinhua said.

They were spotted by local residents and reported to the State Security Department in Fujian on Aug. 20, it said.

It said they confessed they had been sent by the Hong Kong-based Chinese-language magazine to take photographs and obtain information about military manoeuvres in the coastal areas of Fujian and visited Xiamen, Fuzhou and Dinghai cities.

They said they knew their acts were illegal and confessed they were guilty of illegally collecting military secrets, Xinhua said. They expressed remorse, it said.

The magazine is owned by garment and publishing magnate Jimmy Lai, who last year wrote a vitriolic article critical of Chinese Premier Li Peng.

Magazine officials said the pair set off late last week to Fuzhou, capital of Fujian province near the East China Sea where China's missile tests were being conducted, to report on popular reaction to the tests.

They said the magazine had not applied for approval for the trip from the local branch of the Xinhua News Agency, the de facto Chinese embassy in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong journalists are required to apply for Chinese government approval through Xinhua before going on reporting trips to China.



Human rights activist Harry Wu speaks briefly to the press upon his arrival at his home in Milpitas, California. Mr. Wu, 58, a naturalised U.S. citizen, was expelled from China 66 days after authorities detained him as he entered the country and after he was convicted to spying and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and expulsion. Behind him is Jeff Fiedler, a senior member of the human rights organisation (AFP photo)

Speaking to reporters for the first time since his expulsion from China hours after being sentenced to 15 years in prison for spying, Mr. Wu said he did not know so much had happened outside China while he was in jail.

During his two months in captivity, he said, "there was no music, no radio, no newspapers and sometimes the Chinese officers said: 'America can do nothing...'"

"I think they can only destroy a man, but they cannot defeat him," the exhausted and frail-looking Wu said as he limped from a car to his two-story home in a quiet street in Milpitas, 80 kilometres south of San Francisco.

"I remember the words of Ernest Hemingway: 'The man is made not for defeat,'" said Mr. Wu.

Mr. Wu said he was very proud he was American. "If I was not American I don't think I could be out," he said, adding that he appreciated everything people had done on his behalf.

Mr. Wu earlier had an emotional reunion with his wife Ching Lee Wu at San

Francisco International Airport where he arrived on a commercial flight from Shanghai.

Mr. Wu said he planned to rest and take some medicine. "Because my back is very bad. I could not even stand in the court," said Mr. Wu, who suffers from severe back problems.

Mr. Wu, a naturalised American citizen who has angered China by documenting charges of human rights abuses in Chinese labour camps, was detained on June 19 when he entered China, aggravating already strained Sino-U.S. relations.

A court in the central Chinese city of Wuhan this week convicted Mr. Wu of the capital charge of espionage and of impersonating a police officer and sentenced him to 15 years in jail and expulsion.

Mr. Wu's expulsion, welcomed by President Bill Clinton, was likely to ease tense U.S.-China relations and to clear the way for possible attendance by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at the U.N. World Conference on

Women in Beijing next month.

After his brief remarks at his Milpitas home, Jeff Fiedler, a spokesman for Mr. Wu, said Mr. Wu had spent two months in isolation and was "experiencing all the results of isolation."

"So we want to get him back to some strength and then he'll be more than happy to meet with you," Mr. Fiedler told reporters.

Mr. Wu was examined by a doctor at the airport and then driven away without speaking to scores of waiting reporters.

A crowd of supporters, some carrying flowers and placards reading "welcome home, Harry," waited for Mr. Wu at the airport.

In a separate development, a senior U.S. official arrived Friday on a fence-mending trip to Beijing.

The envoy, Under-Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff, was to meet Saturday with Deputy Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, and — if the visit goes well — with Foreign Minister Qian Qichen Sunday.

His four-day trip follows a meeting earlier this month between Mr. Qian and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, after bilateral ties were strained by a visit to the United States by President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan, China's bitter political rival.

"Sino-American relations should improve," a diplomat said, suggesting that Mr. Wu's expulsion opened the way to letting Mr. Clinton head the U.S. delegation to the conference — as well as a summit between her husband and Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

"It would be an indisputable victory for China if Mr. Clinton, who publicly called the country's leaders tyrants when he was running for office, put out the welcome mat for Jiang," the diplomat said.

Other sources suggested Mr. Wu's release indicated that China's professional diplomats were back in control, after ideologues, in an emotional backlash, had steered Sino-American policy onto a hardline course.

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Shift, when right

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's address to the nation Wednesday in which he strongly criticised the Iraqi leadership's handling of the crisis in Iraq does not necessarily signify an immediate Jordanian policy shift regarding its eastern neighbour and sister country. As early as the summer of 1992, King Hussein expressed his dismay at the Iraqi leadership's clinging to power in disregard for the plight of its people. In fact most Jordanians had long lost faith in the Iraqi leadership following its failure to save face, and the whole of Iraq, in the early days of the Gulf crisis by withdrawing its troops from Kuwait and afterwards when the Iraqi army was defeated and humiliated despite its leaders' stubbornness in standing up to the U.S.-led alliance.

It is true the Jordan's interest lies in trading with Iraq, which, on the other hand, serves as the Kingdom's strategic depth. Moreover, Jordan and the Jordanians love Iraq and the Iraqis as brothers, sisters, neighbours and friends. But Jordan has equal interest with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the rest of the Arab countries. Whether the contention that Iraq contemplated twice in the past eight months a repeat of the 1990 Kuwait debacle or not, we have to admit that there is genuine fear in Riyadh and Kuwait of the intentions of the Iraqi regime.

A similar fear also exists in Israel, which now is in peace with Jordan and which is only separated from the Jewish state by the Jordanian desert and the cities of Zarqa, Amman and Salt. The same Iraqi regime, as the King has pointed out, used Jordanian airspace to launch rocket attacks on Israel with total disregard to Jordan security.

There is a near consensus in the Arab World and in the West that the U.N.-imposed sanctions against Iraq will not be totally lifted, unless and until Iraq complied fully with all U.N. resolutions including an account of Kuwaiti prisoners and the introduction of a political system that respects human rights of all Iraqis.

Judging by the record of the Iraqi regime these will take ages to accomplish. Jordan cannot therefore wait for too long to achieve one of its major policy objectives, which is none other than to lift the sanctions and alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. If the King's warning to the Iraqi leadership to change strategy and tactics are not heeded promptly then a real shift in Jordan's policy will become inevitable. It is not right for any regime to survive while its people die.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ROLF EKEUS came to Amman not to learn more about Iraqi military secrets or more secrets about Iraqi weapons but as part of his mission he the American intelligence services, charged Tareq Masarweh, a writer in Al Ra'i. Mr. Ekeus knew well that Hussein Kamel Hassan, who defected to Jordan on Aug. 8, could not have brought with him military secrets and scientific data which all the Iraqi scientists and engineers have compiled for years, but he came in order to complete his American secret mission by meeting with the defector for reasons known only to the American military and U.S. administration, said the writer. He heard Mr. Ekeus say that the Iraqis are unable to produce any mass destruction weapons and that all the Iraqi weapons of this kind have been destroyed and surveillance is in place in Iraq to monitor future developments in any weapons production, said the writer. Therefore, there could be no further justification for the sanctions, said the writer, who added that Mr. Ekeus and the Western powers are intent on removing the Iraqi scientists or luring them away from their country so that they would not be able to develop dangerous weapons in the future. This, he said, was his second mission in the area crying that to date 11,000 Iraqi medical specialists have emigrated to Australia and New Zealand in the past three years. The writer said that the next mission of Mr. Ekeus is to see that the Iraqi scientists are removed from the scene and until that happens the Iraqi people will have to continue to suffer under the crippling sanctions.

A WRITER in Al Dustour daily criticised officials at the Ministry of Education who have been claiming that all preparations were made for the start of the school year and for lessons to be given as of the first day in school. When the schools opened Tuesday no arrangements had been made for the start of teaching; there were shortages of books and stationery and the schools administrations as well as the parents were busy trying to find the textbooks, the stationery and other requirements, said Fakhri Kawar. The writer, said that the parents and all Jordanians were happy to hear that ministry officials had made arrangements for the students to start learning right from the start of the school year but they were disappointed when they were faced with the realities on the ground. He said that the officials should have told the public the truth about the situation, especially as the schools are receiving 1.3 million students who need the services of 70,000 teachers, adding that this is not an easy task and that the ministry should have made ample preparations for the schools weeks before they were re-opened for the school year. On top of the difficulties at the schools, said the writer, many of the parents who come from limited-income groups could by no means afford to buy the books and stationery as they have not yet received their salaries, which come at the end of the month.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

King's speech signals no change in Jordan's policy towards Iraq

HIS MAJESTY the King's address to the nation on Wednesday on the recent developments in Iraq and Jordanian-Iraqi relations did not signal any shift in the Kingdom's policy towards its eastern neighbour. It was, in fact, a collective summary of what the King had been saying in public and private since the Gulf crisis. If one puts together what the King said during his trips to the U.S. and in discussions with Arab and foreign leaders since 1990, then we have a major part of the speech. The additional element in the address was the situation after the Aug. 8 defection of Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan, Iraq's former minister of industries and the brains behind the country's weapons programmes.

In basic terms, the King's words reflected the continued Jordanian concern to see an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people. Regardless of the shifts in the regional political map throughout history, human contacts and relations between Jordanians and Iraqis have always remained strong. As such, the suffering of the Iraqi people under the crippling sanctions, imposed when their country invaded Kuwait five years ago, pains us all.

Jordan never made any secret of its consistent effort to ease/relax the sanctions against Iraq so that Iraqi mothers could feed their children and the sick and elderly could be looked after. That was indeed Jordan's first priority and it remains so today. The next priority was to ensure that Iraq, a force to reckon with in political, economic and military terms in the Middle East, is brought back into the mainstream life in the region and given back the strong and effective role it has always played in regional politics.

Regardless of everything, it remains a solid fact on the ground that Iraq is among the giants of the Middle East. The human and material resources of that country could not be matched with any other player in the region. Side-stepping Iraq and working to bring about changes in the region to be compatible with the so-called new world order would never be effective simply because Iraq is very much part of the regional order and of the larger world order.

However, Jordan always put the human element first and politics second. For us in Jordan it was and is unbearable to see our brethren and sisters being denied their basic right, the right to live with their fundamental needs — foods, medicine, clothing, housing and education despite the vast resources their country holds.

Very unfortunately, the efforts to Jordan alone could not succeed, particularly that the big powers of the world had their priorities and agendas. Posing further obstacles to the Jordanian quest to help the people of Iraq was the obvious cat-and-mouse game that Baghdad and the United Nations played in the context of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

From a detached point of view, it would look as if the international community stood back and watched as the game was being played out, with a very biased party, the United States, assuming the role of referee. Needless to say, the outcome of the game had been predetermined and remains so today.

In such a scenario, Jordan could have hoped to achieve very little effective results in its campaign to end the misery of the people of Iraq. At the same time, what was going on within the borders of Iraq was not conducive to helping the campaign either.

In a nutshell, the King's address reflected the pain of the people of Jordan as they witness the people of Iraq suffer. The pain is intensified when we also see that the country's external policies, by design or coincidence, are contradictory to the very essence of the situation and the need to satisfy international norms and requisites.

Iraqi television broadcast the King's speech in its entirety without comment except that Iraqi viewers were told to draw their conclusions from the Monarch's words. One definite motivation behind the Iraqi decision to broadcast the speech was clear: There could not have been any mistaking of the Jordanian concern and sympathy for the Iraqi people in their hour of suffering.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Israeli policies feuding violence in occupied territories

By Elia Nasrallah

THE ARABIC dailies last week gave prominence to the bus explosion at Ramat Eshkol in occupied Jerusalem, the Iraqi question, pan-Arab affairs and domestic issues.

Writing in Al Dustour, columnist Saleh Al Qallab blamed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for the explosion in Jerusalem, saying that his policies have paved the way for such incident. The arrest of Musa Marzuk one of Hamas leaders in the United States, and the Jewish settlers attacks on Arab lands and property have served as a catalyst for the explosion as both have been condoned by Mr. Rabin's government, said the writer. He said Hamas, which declared responsibility for the attack, wanted to prove that it was not affected by the settlers actions nor by the arrest of one of its leaders and carried out the attack despite the closure of the Gaza Strip and the strict security precautions in Israel. Indeed, said the writer, the attack was expected because Mr. Rabin has escalated his government's repression of the Palestinians and continued to drag his feet over the implementation of the Oslo agreement with the Palestinians.

As long as the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations remain deadlocked and the Palestinians denied their legitimate rights, Israel should expect more explosions and more suicidal attacks, said Ahmad Al Mislal in Al Ra'i. The writer said that the attack in Jerusalem came as a natural reaction to Israel's repressive measures, the Jewish settlers' attacks on Arab lands, the closure of holy shrines in Jerusalem and Hebron before the Arab worshippers and Israel's continued settlements policies. We do not condone the killing of innocent civilians and call for peace and security to prevail so that violence would end, said the writer, who added that the Israelis on the other hand seem to be opposed to such principles and are not interested in a comprehensive peace. He said Israel should speed up the peace process and give back the Palestinians their rights so as to avoid violent attacks in the future.

Ibrahim Al Absi, a writer in Al Ra'i, described the bus explosion in Jerusalem in the past week as an expression of despair and frustration on the part of the Palestinians, who are fed up with the promises about peace and freedom without seeing the peace dividends come true. The writer said that all the explosions that take place inside Israel should not be interpreted as mines in the path of peace but rather as actions intended to goad Israel to implement U.N. resolutions, pull out its forces from Arab land and end the presence of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The writer said that the Palestinians have been hearing promises that peace was imminent but for the past 28 years they did not feel peace and have been hoping for an end to occupation but in reality they continue to see settlers squatting on Palestinian land, attacking Palestinian citizens and seizing their property.

Warning that the explosion in Jerusalem would not be the last, a writer in the weekly Al Sabil said that it was the Jews that started the violence against the Arabs and they are now paying for their actions. Hilmi Al Asmar said that the Jews have killed a great number of Arabs in the past three decades, burnt Al Aqsa Mosque, attacked worshippers in the holy shrines, demolished Arab homes and continue to detain thousands of others. The explosion in Jerusalem, said the writer, serves as a reminder that the Israelis and their backers are bound to meet failure in all their plots and their evil designs in the Arab lands and it was a message not only to the Israelis but also to those who condemn resistance acts against the Israelis that the repressed people can never accept injustice and occupation.

Sultan Al Hattab, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that those in the peace camp, whether they are Arabs or Israelis, feel disappointed that violence continues as a result of Israel's adamant stands and repressive policies against the Arab people. The writer said that the main beneficiary of the attack in Jerusalem are the extremists in Israel who are fighting the peace process with all their might. But the writer said it has to be noted that the settlers are helped in their drive by the Israeli government itself because it is intent on carrying a policy of evicting Arab people from Jerusalem, settling Jews on Arab land, detaining thousands of people, demolishing Arab homes, especially in the Jerusalem area and holding on to Israel's claim over Jerusalem as the united capital of the Jewish state.

about peace and freedom

without seeing the peace dividends come true. The writer said that all the explosions that take place inside Israel should not be interpreted as mines in the path of peace but rather as actions intended to goad Israel to implement U.N. resolutions, pull out its forces from Arab land and end the presence of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

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Saleh Al Qallab, a writer

in Al Dustour, said that the uproar created by the Americans over Iraq nowadays will not affect the Iraqi leadership or people. The Americans have tried their hand with similar policies against Fidel Castro, the president of Cuba, and failed, said the writer. Indeed, the Americans, through their current moves, are intent on seeking closer links with the Gulf states and to protect oil interests rather than seeking to change the Iraqi regime. However, said the writer, the real problem for the Iraqis lies in their own country where the leadership ought to give more freedoms to the public and end excessive actions by the president's relatives and family members and embark on democracy.

These, he added, will enable the regime to stand fast in the face of American conspiracies. It is dangerous to see the president's son invested with all powers and assuming the command of the presidential and private guards, and enjoying the presidency, according to the writer. He said that this centralisation and lack of public freedoms are the real enemies of Iraq and its people.

His views were echoed by a writer in Al Ra'i, who said that the time is ripe for a change in Iraq in a manner that would safeguard the Iraqi people's interests and ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Iraqi people. The interests of Jordan and the other Arab and Islamic countries are bound to be protected if Iraq is transformed into a democracy, its people enjoy freedom and its dealings with its neighbours are conducted on the basis of mutual respect, said Hani Saoudi. The writer said that the defection of the Iraqi president's sons-in-law, who used to hold key positions in Iraq, has no doubt caused an earthquake under the feet of the Iraqi leadership, which, he said, should learn a good lesson and embark on the path of change before it is too late.

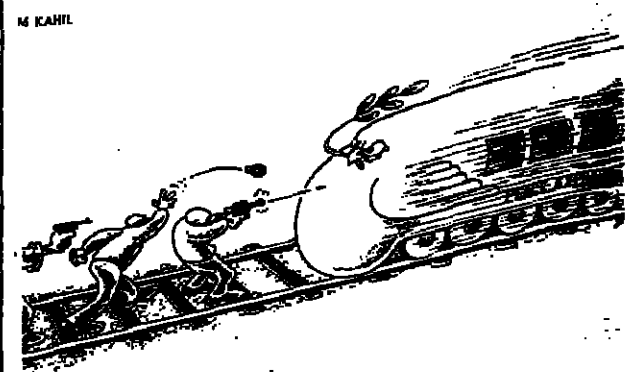
Mohammad Kawash, a writer in Al Dustour, said that the big fuss created by Washington over the situation in Iraq following the defection of close relatives of President Saddam Hussein is unjustified and cannot fool any one. Jordan, for its part, has declared it will not boycott Iraq and denied that the Iraqis were massing troops along the Jordanian Iraqi border, noted the writer. He said most observers believe that

Washington's actions were designed to keep the Gulf states in a state of fear of alleged Iraqi danger and so remain dependent on the United States for weapons and protection. He said that the Gulf countries, which have paid dearly in the Gulf crisis, are trying not to fall in the American trap once again.

Not a single person in Jordan wishes to see the embargo on Iraq continued and so no Jordanian expects American pressure on the Kingdom to succeed, said Taher Al Adwan, a writer in Al Dustour. Jordan is not closing its borders with Iraq nor is it ending its trade with the Iraqi people despite America's pressure on it to help tighten the noose around the Iraqi leadership, said the writer. He said that Jordan did not succumb to Washington's pressures during the Gulf war when Jordan was under a blockade and will not do that under the present circumstances. The writer said that no one believes that Iraq, which is trying to obtain medicine and food for its people, is able or intends to launch military adventures against other Arab states.

A writer in Al Dustour, described the rapprochement between Jordan and Saudi Arabia as a step in the right direction of initiating reconciliation among the rest of the Arab countries. Mohammad Subeishi said that the Gulf crisis has caused deep rifts among Arab states, stressing that the time is ripe now for basing inter-Arab relations on very solid basis characterised by mutual respect. The meetings between officials from Jordan and Saudi Arabia are bound to place the relations on their original and sound track once again for interests of the Arab Nation.

Commenting on the rise in the number of violations of Ministry of Supply regulations on the part of Jordanian merchants, a writer in Al Ra'i said that the increase in these violations reflect the fact that the ministry's measures are ineffective and do not serve their purpose. Nazih said that the merchants have been found to be manipulating prices and profiteering, selling food products with expired dates and floating all the ministry's regulations, causing much suffering for the needy groups. The writer said that the merchants seem undeterred by the penalties imposed for such violations and do not see strict measures imposed by the government to stop malpractices.



Of cucumbers and government

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

IT HAS recently come to my attention that the World Health Organisation (WHO) is helping Jordan set up a corporation to supervise the domestic production of food and the use of insecticides and hormones. Frankly, I was dismayed to read that another government corporation is being created. I had thought that we have finally begun to divest the government of its corporations, and now I hear that a new corporation is being set up. We claim that Jordan is a market economy but with all these corporations (which are basically regulatory bodies) sprouting up, one can legitimately question this claim. Those of us who blame large government for many of our economic woes and wish to see a smaller public sector are saddened by the news.

But wait! To the government's credit, WHO, a world-class and fully credible organisation, is supporting this measure and we do know of many rumours (emanating from scientific research) which state that cucumbers are not fit to eat unless peeled and tomatoes have to be soaked in chlorine or something of the kind to wash away the chemicals. My favourite story is about the ever-growing cucumbers: A husband who purchased tiny cucumbers from the local vegetable stand wakes up in the morning to popping sounds coming from the refrigerator and finds out that his tiny cucumbers have grown overnight into giants, so he screams to his wife "Honey, I blew-up the cucumbers" (this story may be a bit far fetched but I have been hearing it repeatedly since I came back to Jordan a year ago).

Is a die-hard free-market economist about to see the demise of one of his loves — smaller government? No, because economics allows for the interference of government in cases of market failure. One of the causes of market failure is the emergence of externalities which occur when social harm (or benefit) is produced and not accounted for in the market exchange process through the price mechanism. In this case, the government comes in either to reduce these externalities or to attempt to internalise them to the producer(s) by fining them.

Recent studies indicate that in 1987 the amount of nitrogen enriched fertiliser used in Jordan per 1,000 square metres was 156 kg, while the recommended amount should not have exceeded 15 kg. In other words, we use 10 times the recommended amount. Such an abuse of fertilisers has contributed to or caused illness and even death among farmers (some in the form of cancer which I believed went unreported); destruction of the soil; and creation of chemical residue that serves as a poison to many living creatures like the chemical-stuffed fish in the King Talal Dam. But farmers continue to use such fertilisers. Why? The answer lies in the economics of agriculture in Jordan. Farmers use such large amounts of fertilisers because of the following:

1. High cost of production factors

Because of the rising cost of living, Jordanian labour refuses to work at low real agricultural wages, although such wages are necessary for Jordan's labour intensive agriculture production to be profitable.

Therefore, substitute labour from Egypt and Syria does the honours.

■ The interest rate is high and has recently increased further relative to the rate of return on agricultural ventures, so borrowing is not economically justifiable for farmers who wish to expand production.

■ Water is a very scarce resource in Jordan and it is expensive to obtain. Thus, agriculture becomes an even higher risk industry that depends on rain water.

■ Managerial farming skills in Jordan are lacking. Therefore, information asymmetries in the producer-seller-buyer triangle contribute further to faulty decisions and make bankers require higher interest rates on loans than they normally would.

■ The cost of equipment is formidable due to customs duties and shipping costs which force the farmer to continue to use labour intensive production techniques, thereby making farming in Jordan a highly inefficient, labour intensive industry.

■ The drive to build that ultimate villa is being satisfied by ruining and depleting our scarce agricultural lands which further increases the price of land and makes the opportunity cost (foregone earnings) of farming in Jordan the highest in the world.

■ Since land, labour, machinery and water are all relatively expensive, what is left for the farmers to do? The answer must be to raise the price. Which brings us to the next point.

2. Government control of prices and price ceilings:

The government has taken upon itself to control the prices of agricultural goods. So a farmer who is faced with rising production costs cannot raise prices because the government will fine him for doing so. Now, if you were in his shoes, what would you do? You would use more and more fertiliser to get the most out of your land. Of course, you know that such uses are harmful to people, but rational thinking dictates that as long as your gain outweighs your cost you will use it again and again. Also, as long as you do not know of the immediate dangers you are bringing upon yourself and the environment, you will always play the social cost of hormones and poisonous fertiliser.

3. Lack of consumer and producer awareness

Quality should be our first and foremost concern. One should never accept the statement "this is the best there is" because this statement is a cop out. Every product should have a label which carries information about its contents. ■ Labels should be clear and easily readable. ■ Consumers should ask for the names of the contents of a product in order to decide upon its suitability for consumption. ■ Producers should demand, obtain, and disclose full information about the contents of a product they are planning to use.

■ Laws must punish false advertisers and consumers need to know that they can sue people who cheat them. What is the solution? The solution is and must always be smaller government. Since there is no perfect solution yet, for now we need a policing government to catch those who poison us in the name of profit or ignorance and we need less of mass created by government.

King speed

Continued from page 6

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BUSINESS AS USUAL: Iraqis go about their business as usual in the streets of Baghdad. The situation in the Iraqi capital was reportedly normal and there was little sign of tension raised by the recent developments (AFP photo)

King speech signals shift

(Continued from page 1)

by statements coming from both governments supporting the preservation of the status quo between the two countries," Mr. Izzeddin maintains.

Other politicians and analysts interviewed by the Jordan Times say that while the King has sought to clarify the reasons behind Jordan's growing disappointment with the Iraqi regime, His Majesty's criticism was not new.

"There is no decisive shift especially if one recalls that the King's comments about Iraq over the past few years have not exactly been flattering to the Iraqi regime," a former senior official says. "What is new this time is the context and circumstances in which the King's disappointment and criticism have been expressed."

The former official was pointing to several public statements made by the King since the Gulf war ceasefire of 1991, including a recent open call for change he made in an interview with the Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahnrot.

In the U.S. in 1992 the King, after meeting with Saudi ambassador to Washington Prince Bandar bin Sultan, said that if he felt that his presence was becoming a burden to his people he would leave in what was interpreted to be a direct reference to President Saddam.

"With this in mind, one cannot say that the speech is a sudden shift," the former official says. But what might be a shift, Jordanian politicians and analysts generally agree, is that the King, by making the speech now, appeared to be preparing the Jordanian people for a possible change of policy if the situation requires it in the future.

"This is perhaps one of the main objectives of the speech," a parliamentarian maintains. "Besides the King also wanted to answer sceptics on his decision to grant asylum to (Lt. Gen. Hussein) Kamel and explain the thinking that had guided his decision."

The King, those who spoke to the Jordan Times point out, was trying to impress upon Jordanians that a new Middle East reality was emerging; and based on this, the Arabs, including the Iraqis, needed to understand more about the requirements of the new era.

In his speech, the King said that he wished for the Arab Nation "to wake up to the reality of a world that has changed to the extent that it witnessed the rise of a historical movement that brought to surface contradictions of all sorts at the same time."

"The King was giving the Jordanian people a demonstration of the new regional dynamics," a former minister says. "The King was basically saying that Jordan's actions today have to be assessed by today's yardsticks."

Western analysts have been describing what they see as the King's new shift in policy as the "missing element needed for a strategy to remove Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power."

'Pelletreau trip not anti-Iraq bid'

(Continued from page 1)

going to be a continuing dialogue," he said. "Jordan is dependent on Iraq for petroleum and has been unable to find an economically feasible alternative."

"We're working with the Jordanian government on additional steps to combat sanctions evasion. We have a very active dialogue with the Jordanians on this issue," the acting spokesman said. "The Jordanian government has been very supportive of efforts to interdict goods destined for Iraq that pass through Aqaba. Jordan's only seaport."

Contending that with Jordan's latest shift in attitude "the cards are all there to topple the regime in Baghdad," a Western diplomat was quoted by Reuters in Amman as saying "now it is just a question of progressing with caution and sensitivity to the local sentiment of all these countries concerned."

But despite the West's excitement over the Iraqi defections and the King's speech further distancing himself from the Iraqi regime, Jordanian politicians say that Jordan has not yet received any iron-clad guarantees that would convince Jordan to make a final break with the Iraqi regime.

A Middle East shuttle by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, which included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and two trips to Jordan, apparently failed to bring out the success story that Washington may have expected, politicians believe.

"One gets the feeling that the King is still waiting for something to happen, which is why he has left his options open," one former official maintains.

He and other politicians in fact point out that despite the new elements that the King introduced in his speech, if he wanted to show the world that he intends to handle Iraq differently from before, there was a number of measures he could have taken to make that change evident.

Politicians say that Jordan has at least three cards in its hand that it could use to weaken the Iraqi regime and tighten the noose around it. One of these cards is to physically close the borders between Jordan and Iraq and cut the flow of food and medicine to the Iraqi people, "which the King said he will not do," the former official who spoke to the Jordan Times says.

The second possibility would be to allow the Iraqi defectors to use Jordanian soil as a launching pad for much more damaging activity than media statements calling for the toppling of the Iraqi regime or discrediting it "something which until now the King has not allowed," the former official adds.

He and others point out that while the former Iraqi defence minister has been allowed to launch a media campaign out of Amman "it doesn't appear as if he has the go-ahead, from the King, to pose a physical threat to the Iraqi regime out of Jordan."

The third tactic is to exert moral pressure on the Iraqi regime to mend its ways and face up to its responsibilities to its own people and the Arab World at large, "which is what the King has done in his speech," says the former official. "But this tactic has limited power to influence the stability of the Iraqi regime."

"In sum, the King is trying to prepare the people for change and for any eventual shift that materialises as a result," the former official maintains. "He is not, however, foreclosing any option or closing any door," the former official concludes.

"In my opinion, Sir, we must take a quick decision," said the voice, apparently addressing President Saddam. "Any delay will allow the enemy to mobilise its forces and capabilities against us, leaving us unable to act," it added.

According to the TV announcer, "Hussein Kamel was the only member (of the RCC) who was calling for occupying Kuwait and the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia," and the call was "against the will of the Iraqi leadership."

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Thursday that President Saddam had stripped Gen. Hassan and unnamed others whom he described as "the rest

Mubarak offers asylum

(Continued from page 1)

time he made the offer of asylum to President Saddam was to King Hussein one week before President Saddam's two sons-in-law defected to Jordan with their families on August 8. But he said he refused the offer.

"I asked King Hussein about Iraq and he told me that the situation was very difficult. I proposed that if President Saddam likes to come here I will accept him as a political refugee to solve the problem of the Iraqi people," Mr. Mubarak said.

"King Hussein told me that Saddam is not that sort of man," Mr. Mubarak said. "I am again offering a proposal that I have thought about before the defection of Hussein Kamel to Jordan. I am still on my words if this will solve the problem instead of having bloodbaths."

Iraq meanwhile welcomed Mr. Mubarak's cautious response to a speech by King Hussein in which he said Gen. Hassan had told him Baghdad had planned to attack Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Iraq's Information Minister Hamed Youssef Hattim praised Egyptian President Mubarak for saying that the King's speech appeared to have been politically motivated.

"President Hosni Mubarak's remarks show true vision and an objective attitude in the face of a biased media campaign accusing Iraq of planning military operations against Jordan and Kuwait," said Mr. Hammudi.

"Despite the fact that Iraq disagrees with the Egyptian president on his stand in the 1990 crisis (following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait), his remarks yesterday (Thursday) show that his analysis is good and he is avoiding interfering in Iraq's internal affairs," Mr. Hammudi added, quoted by the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

The King's speech was welcomed in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In Cairo Mr. Mubarak said: "I listened to King Hussein's speech and it was very brave. But what is the goal behind it? It could have political aims."

Mr. Mubarak criticised Gen. Hassan and others outside of Iraq who have called for the fall of President Saddam, saying only Iraqis inside the country could determine their leader's fate.

He also dismissed fears of an Iraqi invasion of its neighbours. "I can't imagine any military operation happening between Iraq and Jordan" nor "any military operations by Iraq against Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, especially after previous experience," he said.

"Iraq is not in any military state that enables it for war," he said.

Kuwaitis welcome King's speech

(Continued from page 1)

Another member of Kuwait's 50-seat parliament, Islamic legislator Jamal Al Kandari, went even further and said: "We should support Jordan against any possible pressures from Iraq."

He stressed that parliamentarians have expressed their support for supplying Jordan with oil if Iraq cuts off its supplies to the Kingdom.

That, he declared, "will encourage countries that sided with Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait to stand with us now."

The legislators' attitudes towards Jordan underlined how much relations between the two countries have improved in recent months.

Even a year ago, no one dared say anything positive about Jordan because it was still considered to have betrayed Kuwait for its perceived tilt towards Iraq in August 1990.

Opinion split over trade links

(Continued from page 1)

of trade and economic links with Jordan.

Despite the international sanctions on Iraq, imposed by the U.N. following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the country remains the largest export market for Jordan, which supplies mainly food and medicine which are exempt from the sanctions.

In the last five years, many Jordanian companies have also developed food and pharmaceutical products for the Iraqi market. For most of them, Iraq remains the sole client.

In his speech to the nation on Wednesday night, the King affirmed that Jordan would not close its borders with Iraq and that the Kingdom would not succumb to external pressure aimed at influencing its policies. That was a reference to reports that the U.S. was pressuring Jordan to cut itself off as Iraq's only lifeline to the outside world through suspending all exports to Iraq and imports of Iraqi oil to the Kingdom.

A senior government source predicted that Jordanians would "absorb the negative impact" of the recent developments.

"We are not denying that there will be a negative impact. But we don't think that the impact will be as major as many people try to project it to be," said the source, who did not want to be identified.

By and large, most analysts and businessmen agreed that Iraq was unlikely to adopt any immediate measure to

Sharaa assails Oslo accord

OSLO (R) — Syria said on Friday the historic 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accord had resulted in a maze of new negotiations that threatened to strengthen the hand of opponents to peace in the Middle East.

"We had our own reservations about the Oslo agreement from the beginning," Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said of the accord hammered out between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the Norwegian capital.

"We said the agreement would be an endless negotiation because each provision would need another negotiation and each agreement emerging from that original

agreement would need further negotiation," said Mr. Sharaa, who was in Oslo for talks with his Norwegian counterpart Bjorn Tore Godal.

"Meanwhile the opponents of peace might gain strength because the longer the peace process takes, the shorter peoples' patience will be," he told reporters.

Mr. Sharaa, in Oslo on the last leg of a five-day tour of Scandinavia, said many people would lose hope in achieving peace and the peace camp would be weakened instead of strengthened.

Syria had been again dividing the peace process into a series of negotiations between separate states, he

said. "The more we slice peace into pieces, the more peace is partial, the further away stability and security will be achieved in the region," he said. "That's our main concern."

Mr. Godal said he expected to see a positive move in Israeli-PLO negotiations within the next few days.

"We have been in contact almost on a day-to-day basis with parties in the area and I'm relatively confident that we will see positive steps in the area in the next few days," he said.

Norway hosted secret meetings between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators that led to the signing of the Israeli-PLO peace accord in

Washington in September 1993.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO leader Yasser Arafat received the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo for the accord.

Mr. Godal said he had accepted an invitation to visit Syria in the near future, but he did not see any expanded role for Norway as mediator in the region.

Mr. Sharaa said he did not see any end to the deadlock in the near term "because the obstacles on this way of the Syrian-Israeli track are tremendous and at the moment Israel seems not ready to continue the negotiations."

Deputies stick to party lines

(Continued from page 1)

record straight and clarified for the people the Kingdom's national and pan-Arab positions. It has reaffirmed Jordan's long-held principles towards all countries from east to west, especially towards Iraq to which Jordan has never turned its back."

Senator Akaleh said during an Upper House session on Thursday.

Other senators who spoke during the session, including Naeem Rashid, Abdul Aziz Khayyat and Hammad Ma'ayeh, also voiced support for the King's "true stand" vis-a-vis Iraq.

The chairman of the Lower House's Foreign Affairs Committee, Abdullah Ensour, said the King's address revealed the sound judgement and clear vision of the King.

"Our position does not mean that we are closing borders nor does it mean that we are against Iraq," Dr. Ensour said. "The King reaffirmed that Jordan is not plotting against anyone nor is seeking to harm any country. But Iraq has problems and Jordan has information that the embargo will not be

lifted even if all of Iraq's armament was demolished."

"Jordan has not changed its policies," he added.

Lower House Deputy Mohammad Daoudieh said the speech reflects the King's clear vision of the future.

"It reflects the King's endeavour to pull Iraq out of the darkness and the suffering through which it has passed."

Mr. Daoudieh called on "all those who care for human rights and freedoms" to support the King's move. He also called for seminars and activities to be held for the purpose of translating the King's speech into action for the sake of "leading a happy and dignified life."

Speaking on behalf of the Islamist opposition in Parliament, spokesperson of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) Party Hamzeh Mansour said his group needed time to study the speech, namely by the front's executive bureau.

However, Mr. Mansour said that the front's stand had not changed vis-a-vis Iraq, nor was there a shift in its belief in the non-interference policy in other countries' internal affairs.

Other opposition deputies interviewed by the Jordan Times believed there was a shift of policy in Jordan's position that does not serve the country's interests. They also attacked the idea that Iraq intended to invade Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"I have never been over-enthusiastic about Iraq's (policies), but we have to build our stand on our national and long-held principles," Deputy Hammad Sa'eed said, adding that Iraq's armament should not be destroyed since all U.N. resolutions are "unjust" and aim at securing the "Jewish interests" in the region.

Leftist Deputy Toujan Faisal criticised what she saw as a turning point in Jordan's policy towards Iraq.

"Hussein Kamel does not have credibility," she contended. "How could we determine a course based on what he told us?" she said in reference to a statement made by Gen. Hassan about Iraq plans to invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

But Dr. Ensour said that Iraq radio broadcast on Thursday excerpts of the meeting of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council during which Gen. Hassan

was quoted as telling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that "army was ready" to invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. (See separate story).

Leftist Deputy Bassam Haddadin criticised what he described as an "unnecessary escalation in the Jordanian diplomacy."

"Such escalation does not serve Jordan's interests in the long run. The weakening of Iraq means the weakening of Jordan," he said.

"We have common interests with Iraq. More than 30 per cent of our exports go to Iraq... we should not make it easy (for the West) to squeeze the Iraqi lemon," he added.

While IAF Deputy Bassam Emoush expressed satisfaction at what he called the King's reassurances that Jordan does not have any ambitions in Iraq he did not believe that Iraq had any intention to invade Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

"We have known for a long time now that Iraq is not democratic," he said. "But why was this subject brought up now and why are we forcing it to be committed to democracy. Does this democracy exist in the Gulf states?"

Province is the heart of the problem. We have the capability now. Our people are ready. Our army is ready. Our capabilities are ready. We should not leave the enemies strong. We have not entered Kuwait yet, but the statements and the threats have already reached a peak. The Russians are making statements, the French are moving, and in the end maybe even Russia would carry out aggression against Iraq. We might be hit in any form because we massed troops. The easiest thing to do is to cancel Resolution 715, but we have to be on guard against any massing of American or western troops. Because if that (the massing of troops) happens and our people do not find bread and other things then they might move (against the leadership)."

With due respect to the opinions of the others, I have to say that our people are a two-edged sword. If we are in the right way it can resist and fight, but it can also be used against its own interests. These are things that we have seen. To cut it short, we have to take quick decisions. The longer the delay the more they will mass their troops. If we do not move, we will end up in a bad situation."

World Bank: Gender inequality has economic costs

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Women in developing countries have made progress toward equality but still work longer hours for lower wages and receive less education than men, which hurts economic growth, the World Bank said Thursday.

The international lending institution called on governments to invest in women on grounds that gender inequality curbs productivity and stunts economic growth.

"Gender inequality hampers growth, and governments can no longer afford not to invest in women," the World

Bank said in releasing two reports prepared for the U.N. Conference on Women, from Sept. 4-15 in Beijing.

The new president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, will outline his vision of the gender issue in a speech at the U.N. conference, the bank said in a statement.

"We know that better educated women are more productive, have fewer and healthier children, and are more productive citizens," World Bank spokesman Klas Bergman told AFP.

World Bank studies show

some major strides for women and girls in developing countries in recent decades, with 85 girls per 100 boys enrolled in primary school compared with 65 girls per 100 boys in 1960.

The female workforce has expanded at double the rate of the male workforce, with 30 per cent of women over the age of 15 formally employed in developing countries, the World Bank said.

But women still labour longer for lower wages in positions of lesser responsibility compared with their male counterparts, it said, while

boys still receive more education than girls.

Women are paid on average only 60 to 70 per cent of what their male counterparts earn, while 77 million girls and 52 million boys of primary school age are not in school, the bank said.

The World Bank issued two reports prepared for the U.N. conference, titled "Advancing Gender Equality" and "Toward Gender Equality," outlining the steps governments can take to promote gender equality and economic efficiency.

"It is critical that govern-

ments take the lead where markets fail to capture the full benefits to society of investments in women," the bank said.

Public spending with the highest social returns should give priority to investments with the greatest impact on women's human capital such as basic education, health care, and reproductive health, it said.

Legal reforms to ensure equal opportunity, economic measures to improve stability and incentive, public policies to invest in programmes with high social returns, and

targeted interventions to correct gender inequality can all help achieve major strides for women, it said.

More than one-third of the World Bank's leading portfolio is dedicated to gender issues compared with less than one-tenth a decade ago, it said.

Some \$5 billion of the bank's annual lending of about \$25 billion is devoted to improving the status of women in the areas of primary education, population, health, nutrition, and agriculture, it said.

Lebanon's reserves reportedly fall by 40%

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — The central bank spent about 40 per cent of its foreign currency reserves in the first half of this year to stabilise the Lebanese lira, the independent An Nahar daily has reported.

But the government of billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said the economy is sound.

In a special economic report, An Nahar compiled figures from the central bank that showed net foreign currency reserves had dropped to \$1.65 billion from \$2.73 billion in the first six months of this year, a 39.46 per cent decline.

Gross foreign exchange reserves also dropped 18 per cent, or \$716 million, to stand at the end of June at \$3.12 billion.

The figures were publicised after an opposition legislator claimed the government was about to go bankrupt.

Najah Wakim, an anti-corruption crusader and a virulent opponent of Mr. Hariri, claimed the central bank had all but depleted its foreign currency reserves to shore up the battered Lebanese lira.

But the state minister for finance, Foad Saniora, denied that and accused Mr. Wakim of "scaring people."

After a cabinet meeting Wednesday night, Information Minister Farid Mekary sought to calm concerns about a depreciation in the lira which could wipe out many people's savings.

The cabinet listened to a report from the central bank government that the economic situation had improved in the previous month, Mr. Mekary told reporters. "The situation, thank God, is unshakable."

The central bank has reported earlier that gross fore-

ign currency reserves rose by \$144 million in July.

An Nahar quoted the central bank's first deputy governor, Nasser Saidi, as saying the bank has been intervening in the money market, selling dollars to shore up the lira.

While he did not give any figures, he said: "Let's not forget that the situation in recent months was temporary and subject to political developments and circumstances."

That was a reference to political and economic tension triggered by labour unrest in July and threats of strikes next month.

Since Mr. Hariri took office in October 1992, foreign currency reserves have surged from several hundred thousand dollars to nearly \$4 billion.

The emergence of Mr. Hariri and his ambitious multi-billion dollar plan to rebuild Lebanon from the devastation of the 1975-90 civil war has restored confidence in the battered economy.

He is also credited with stabilising the Lebanese lira, which was pegged at about 3,000 to the U.S. dollar shortly before he assumed office. It has been improving daily, selling this week at about 1,614 liras to the dollar.

But that improvement, which occurred despite worsening economic conditions and continued political wrangling, came at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars in central bank intervention.

India's reforms expected to withstand opposition

NEW DELHI (AP) — As India heads into election season, its economic reform programme looks like it's in trouble. Even if economists like the plan, it could be a ballot box loser.

After decades of erecting barriers in pursuit of a Gandhian philosophy of self-reliance and spartan living, India opened its gates in 1991 to foreign investment and Western products.

Four years later, the middle class is thriving. But one-third of the country — 300 million people — still live below the poverty line, and their disenchantment with reform is becoming a political weapon.

The backlash has targeted a few select multinational companies, mainly Americans ones with high-profile projects.

A Hindu nationalist government in Maharashtra state recently scrapped what would have been India's largest foreign investment — a \$2.8 billion power project by the U.S.-based Enron Corp., arguing that Enron's profits would have been too

high.

In Orissa state, the \$643 million power plant contract of another American company, AES Power, is being challenged, even though the state is run by the same Congress Party that introduced India's free-market reforms four years ago.

Earlier this month, Coca-Cola and Pepsi were singled out at a demonstration against Western consumerism that took place in front of a statue of Mahatma "Mahatma" Gandhi, the revered independence leader who advocated Indian self-reliance.

In the southern Indian city of Bangalore, 100 policemen are guarding the nation's only Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant against farmers who threatened to attack it. In a parliament debate in New Delhi, KFC was derided as epitomising the junk-food culture that India does not need.

In newspapers across the country, editorials warn against a foreign invasion that could turn India into a banana republic. Some cite a

joint venture between the state-owned Doordarshan Television and Cable News Network as an example of India losing control.

While these companies have become hot political issues, hundreds of joint ventures and consumer products have been smoothly launched in the last four years.

In an independence day speech to the nation Tuesday, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao appeared on the defensive. "It is wrong to say that these (foreign) investments are promoting consumerism and big industrial houses," he said. Instead, his reforms had liberated the economy of its shackles.

Opposition politicians hope to tap the wellspring of national pride and anti-colonialism that Gandhi unleashed in the 1940s to drive out the British, and that prime minister Indira Gandhi used in the 1970s to expel companies such as Coca-Cola and IBM.

But few analysts believe India's economic reform are likely to be reversed, even if their author, Prime Minister

P.V. Narasimha Rao loses next year's general election.

"Thanks to the Enron decision, many foreign investors will be hesitant about India now," said E. Sridharan, an analyst at the respected Centre for Policy Research think-tank. "No one will bring in much money until after the election and the new government clearly indicates what its economic policies are."

Opposition parties also realise the economic reforms are popular with the estimated 100 million people with money to spend on consumer luxuries, Mr. Sridharan said, and that India can benefit from the many joint ventures between Indian and foreign companies.

Mr. Rao's reforms have scored impressive achievements: Exports are growing by 27 per cent annually, industrial output is up more than eight per cent, and inflation has been reduced to single digits. After mortgaging its gold in 1991 to stave off bankruptcy, India now has foreign currency reserves of more than \$20 billion.

Moscow will help ease Russian bank crisis

MOSCOW (R) — First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais promised Friday to help ease a credit crunch, loaning Russian banks money so they can pay their bills and pumping funds into a cash-starved economy by buying securities.

Officials said the crisis, which paralysed the money market and left banks afraid to part with cash, could force some of Russia's 3,000 banks to merge or close. But there was no reason to panic, presidential aide Alexander Livshits said.

"The crisis has been localised, it is likely to remain so for some time and then be extinguished," Mr. Livshits told Interfax news agency.

Russian bankers welcomed the government's promise to step in to help troubled banks, although no details of any bailout scheme have yet emerged.

"Since every banking crisis in Russia is a crisis of confidence and a chain reaction, I think the central bank should bail out larger institutions with credits," said one senior banker. "But it should not go beyond that."

He said some banks were very vulnerable to turmoil on the money market because up to 50 per cent of their balances were parked in the

interbank market.

"This is indicative of a systemic crisis and it reveals structural problems," he said. "We will see mergers among some of Russia's bigger banks but not for a while. This is not going to play out easily. The crisis is unprecedented in Russia."

Sergei Balagansky, head of the analytical department at Stolichny Bank, blamed government zeal in bringing inflation down for the latest banking crisis. Mr. Stolichny is one of Russia's biggest commercial banks.

"The economy needs more money for payments," he said by telephone. "They have tried to cut inflation too fast. It is like stopping a car if you brake too fast, it leaves the road."

He added: "If the central bank and the government distance themselves from this problem it will become a big one."

Tight monetary policies brought Russian inflation down to 5.6 per cent in July, from around 18 per cent in January.

Mexico's Zedillo unveils huge debt relief plan

MEXICO CITY (R) — President Ernesto Zedillo has unveiled a huge debt relief plan that will lower interest rates for more than seven million cash-strapped Mexicans hit by their country's economic crisis.

Interest rates have soared at times above 100 per cent since the crash of the peso in December and Mexicans have been known to sell their cars to pay off credit card debts.

"The accord can be applied to the great majority of debtors," Mr. Zedillo said in a televised speech. "It will

potentially benefit, on all their debt, almost six million people who owe less than 200,000 new pesos (\$31,000), and partially benefit almost 1.5 million people who owe more."

Mr. Zedillo, an orthodox economist opposed to government bail-outs, adopted the plan in the face of pressure from increasingly powerful debtors' groups that have regularly blockaded banks around the country to demand debt relief.

Thousands of cash-strapped businesses have closed and more than a mil-

lion people lost their jobs since the crisis began, sparked by devaluation of the currency. The economy shrank more than 10 per cent in the second quarter of this year.

Borrowers will have access to lower interest rates for one year under the plan, which goes into effect Sept. 1.

The plan will also help borrowers who are behind on their payments, with banks pledging to drop legal proceedings against them until Oct. 31 this year.

Businesses will be charged 25 per cent for bank loans, up

to the first \$31,000, compared to the current average rate of 56 per cent. Credit card holders will see rates roughly halved from 70 per cent at present.

THE Daily Crossword by Gerald R. Ferguson

ACROSS

- Duvalier or Hemingway
- Made one's way ardously
- George or Artie
- Panache
- Actress Graft
- Tennille of song
- Milan money
- Asiatic lemur
- Racing's Luyendyk
- Comic strip scream
- James Bond film
- Ground, as leath
- Like some oats
- Suffer
- Tanned leather
- Prospero's play
- Desert robe
- The Auld Lang Syne (Whitney)
- Reply: abbr.
- Cockloft
- Debussy's "La"
- Atmospheric condition
- Champion of dancing
- Promise to pay
- Agree to
- Appropriated
- Twister harbringer
- "Norma"
- Borodin's prince
- City on the Loire
- Ms. encl.
- Be important
- Upper crust
- and terminator
- Aix summers
- Bonheur and Ponselle
- Ball or Capri

DOWN

- Biblical patriarch
- Refuge seeker
- Skiwear
- Collection of anecdotes
- German emperor
- One way to read
- Bruce of films
- Arthurian lady
- Mormon area
- Groom's domain
- Of sixty minutes
- Like an old woman
- Brandish
- Ganef
- Linear measure
- Japanese statesman
- Man of Madrid
- Obsolete acronym
- Hat
- Run
- Go astray
- Paity spread
- From — Z
- Hooper
- Take steps
- "Weakness in —"
- careless
- (Holland)
- Factual
- Be affected by heat
- Negative quantities
- Categories
- Literary form
- Blazing
- Xavier of music
- 100-dollar bill
- Major artery
- Radiographs
- Studio prop
- Inventor John
- Denver's state: abbr.
- San — Obispo
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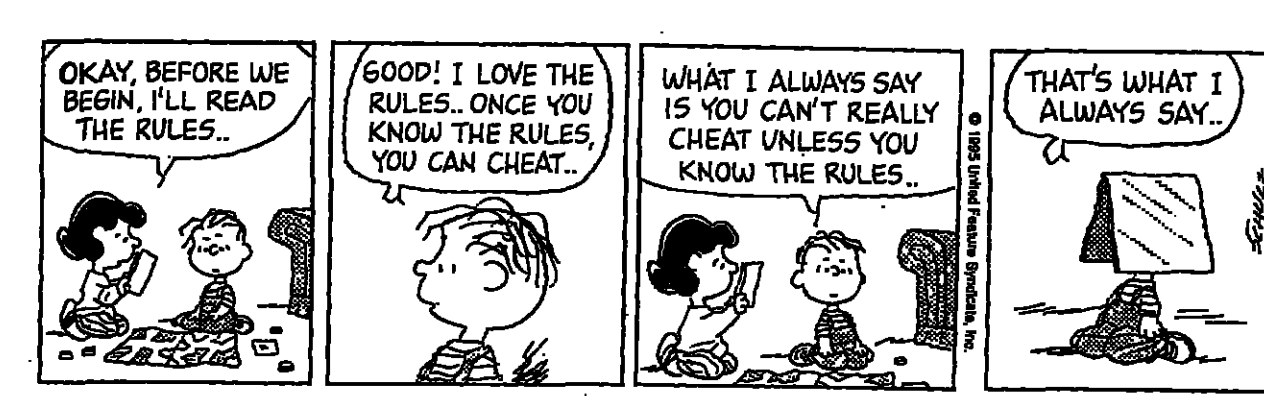
Thursday's puzzle solved

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THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can impress one in power in the morning with your abilities, but don't rest on your laurels. Be more encouraging to the ideas and suggestions of others.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) Use your intuition which is accurate now in handling financial affairs. Think along optimistic lines and be logical in any direction.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your intuition is working fine early in the day, but don't trust it later on. Don't take any risks dealing with others in business.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Make plans to have more abundance in your future. The planets are most favourable today for getting ahead in career matters you are involved in.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be sure to complete any tasks left undone before taking on any new projects today. Don't discuss important business matters with experts unless you're positive they're qualified.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan early for whatever you want to do and then carry through intelligently. This can be a particularly fine day for you in any project you're involved in.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take time to put your business affairs in better order. Await a better time for looking into new outlets and use care while you are in motion.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Support persons who have been loyal to you in the past. Show increased devotion to a loved one today. Plan for the future in your personal life.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Study your money situation today and make plans to have more financial security. Strive to be more efficient at work and success will appear.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have confidence with higher ups early today and gain their support and goodwill. Take time to improve your appearance and the way others see you.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Obtain the information you need from the right sources today. A financial expert can give advice for any plan you have in mind which will help others too.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may want to join with friends for a good time but don't forget to handle a prior commitment that requires your immediate attention. Then relax later.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Business Daily Beat

Ministry to check on financial straits of municipalities

THE TOURISM INVESTMENT Department at the Ministry of Economy and Finance is planning to launch a new initiative to attract foreign investment in the tourism sector.

The initiative is part of a broader strategy to diversify the Jordanian economy and create more jobs in the private sector.

The Ministry is currently reviewing the legal framework governing tourism investments and aims to streamline the process for foreign investors.

Key areas of focus include hotel development, tourism infrastructure, and the promotion of Jordan's cultural and historical heritage.

The Ministry expects that these efforts will lead to a significant increase in tourism-related investments and contribute to the country's economic growth.

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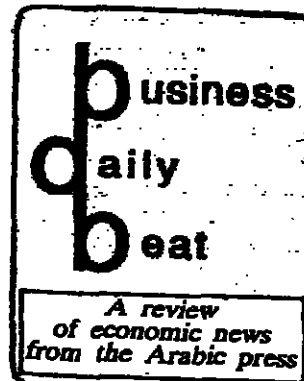
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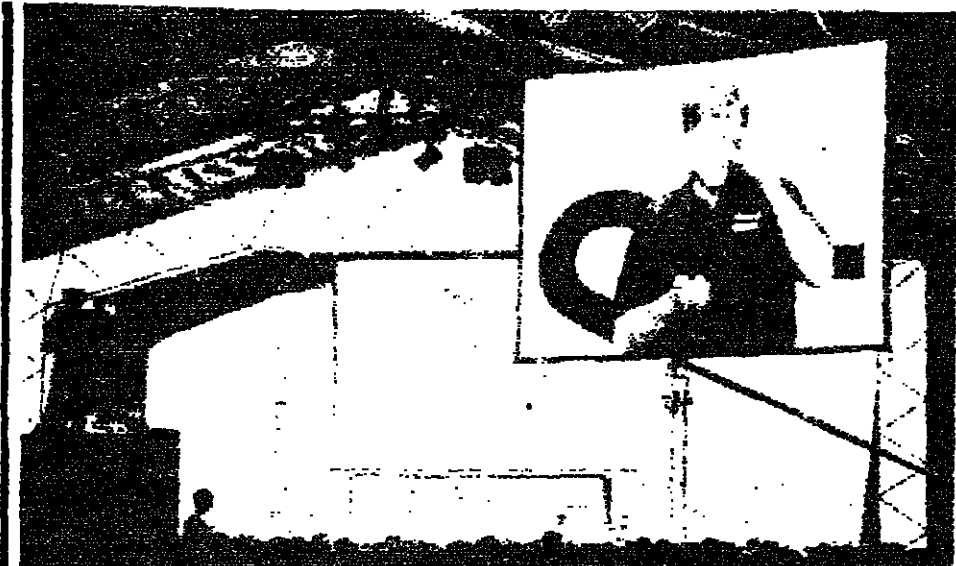
Ministry to check on financial straits of municipalities

THE MINISTRY of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment will this week begin a comprehensive study of the financial conditions of all the municipalities in the Kingdom. According to the minister, Nader Thuheirat, many committees were formed for this purpose. Based on the study, the minister said, a working paper will be prepared to put clear and specific concepts and recommendations to improve the financial conditions of the municipalities. Mr. Thuheirat pointed out that many large municipalities were facing financial difficulties as serious as not being able to pay the salaries of staff and workers at these municipalities. The minister stressed that the main path for those municipalities to get out of their financial straits was to opt for investment projects that would yield steady income and to curb spending and adopt belt-tightening measures. He said that the Cities and Villages Development Bank was ready to finance productive projects through long-term loan provided the projects prove to be economically feasible.

Meanwhile, a member of the Russeifa municipal council said the municipality was highly overstaffed and the new council was reluctant to begin its term by firing large number of workers. He noted that the number of staff was much higher than what the municipality can financially afford. The Russeifa official said the outgoing municipal council appointed 300 employees before the elections were held. (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour)

AN EXTRAORDINARY meeting of the General Assembly of the Al Ahlia Commercial Centres Company authorised a capital increase by JD3 million to JD8 million through floating shares for private subscription. The general manager of the company explained the reason for raising the capital saying that fixed assets amounted to JD 6.2 million, accounting for 76.6 per cent of total assets, meaning that the capital of the company was frozen in fixed assets that does not generate any return except for the increase in value of fixed assets such as the land and the building. He noted that bank credits totaled JD 3 million burdening the company with JD 350,000 in interest per year. As such, the general manager pointed out, the capital increase would settle the balance of JD 1.6 million being the remaining cost of the commercial centre building, finance the construction of the Abela shopping mall at a cost of JD 1.65 million, finance the import and distribution network for JD 600,000 and cover the accumulated deficit of JD 869,000. The company's board of directors has approved building a shopping mall on the plot of land in front of the Abila-Abela superstore and has also approved conducting studies to build other projects similar to the Abila-Abela at other locations in the country. On the financial side, Al Ahlia-Abela superstore recorded JD 4.57 million in sales during the period from May 10 1994 until Dec. 31, 1994 and expects better results this year. The company is now focusing on cutting costs in that drive has reduced its workforce from 400 to 300 workers (Al Dustour + Al Aswaq).

THE TOURISM Investment Department at the Social Security Corporation is retendering its Azraq rest house for private investment against an annual lease. Offers will only be accepted from four companies or specialised hotel institutions until Aug. 28, '95 (Al Ra'i).



An image of Microsoft Chairman William Gates is televised Thursday on a big screen as he introduces Windows 95 during the inaugural presentation of Microsoft's new operating system at the firm's Redmond, Washington campus. The presentation, which included demonstrations of the software and a carnival, was attended by 500 journalists, 2,000 guests, and 9,000 Microsoft employees (AFP photo)

Microsoft's Gates promises new PC era with Windows 95

REDMOND, Washington (R) — In one of the biggest marketing blitzes ever, Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates Thursday officially unveiled Windows 95, saying the software would usher in a new era in personal computing.

The product sent hundreds of thousands of computer buffs swarming into electronic stores worldwide, creating the kind of buying frenzy normally associated with concert ticket sales for the world's biggest rock bands.

"For computer people, this is their woodstock," a woman in a Chicago coffee shop said. But word of a continuing federal antitrust probe cast a shadow over the product launch, one of the most expensive in history.

At a news conference in Washington, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno said the Justice Department was continuing to examine whether Microsoft's online computer network violates antitrust laws. Microsoft's stock fell after the comments, dragging other high-technology stocks down with it.

Microsoft's Windows and Dos Operating Systems control the computer desktop market with an 80 per cent market share, and the company has sold 100 million previous versions of Windows.

That dominance has raised cries of monopoly of rivals, notably those in the online service industry that are worried about Microsoft's entry. Rivals such as America Online, Compuserve and Prodigy, have argued that Microsoft's decision to "bundle" the Microsoft network software with its operating system gives it an unfair advantage.

Financial Times Markets In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 24/8/1995			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7180	0.7140	
Swedish Krona	1.0978	1.1031	
Deutsche Mark	0.4804	0.4858	
Swiss Franc	5.801	0.5830	
French Franc	0.1405	0.1409	
Japanese Yen	0.7361	0.7381	
Dutch Guilder	0.4292	0.4313	
Swedish Krona	0.0441	0.0443	
Italian Lira	0.0441	0.0443	
Belgian Franc	0.0441	0.0443	
Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.8740	1.8875	
Lebanese Lira	0.04255	0.04375	
Saudi Riyal	0.1895	0.1910	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2900	2.3550	
Qatari Riyal	0.1332	0.1349	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2100	
Omani Riyal	1.8475	1.8520	
UAE Dirham	0.1932	0.1983	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3478/88	Canadian dollar	1.4752/62
	1.4752/62	Deutsche marks	1.6520/30
	1.6520/30	Dutch guilders	1.2170/80
	1.2170/80	Swiss francs	30.33/37
	30.33/37	Belgian francs	5.0669/19
	5.0669/19	French francs	1613.24/2
	1613.24/2	Italian lire	96.55/65
	96.55/65	Japanese yen	7.2800/90
	7.2800/90	Swedish crowns	6.4420/70
	6.4420/70	Norwegian crowns	5.7200/50

One Sterling	1.5436/46	U.S. dollar	U.S. dollars
One ounce of gold	\$382.60/383.00		

Uncertainties over Iraq could have strong impact on AFM this week

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prices at the Amman stock exchange largely remained steady while turnover slipped this week, but the market is braced for what could be a serious drop this week related to uncertainties over Iraq, the Kingdom's major export market, brokers reported Friday.

The weekly AFM report said turnover for the week was JD 3.8 million compared with the previous week's JD 4.5 million dinars as speculators hunted down emerging companies.

Prices slipped by about 0.3 per cent, as indicated by the official AFM index based on 60 major firms from

among the 120 listed in the market. The index closed for the week at 155.1 points, down 0.4 points (0.3 per cent) from Saturday's opening of 155.4 points.

Commercial banks and industries accounted for the bulk of the week's trading with a volume of JD 1.5 million and JD 1.49 million dinars respectively. The services sector rang up JD 810,000 dinars and insurance stocks 40,000 dinars, the AFM report showed.

Services stocks shed one per cent during the week, industrials 0.8 per cent, insurance 0.1 per cent and commercial banks 0.1 per cent. AFM dealers, speaking on

condition of anonymity under standing market guidelines, described business during the week as normal and said the 15 per cent drop in turnover did not signify any specific trend.

But, they warned that fears of a rift in ties with Iraq was going to have a strong impact on the market since Iraq is a major export market for many firms listed in the AFM.

"We were expecting a boost in prices next week as a result of the recent agreement on reduction of corporate income tax," said a broker, referring to a compromise between the government and the parliament's finance com-

mittee on amendments to the income tax law and the general sales tax law.

The agreement meant that parliament would endorse an increase of three per cent in sales tax to seven per cent in return for the government accepting a series of income tax reductions that brings down corporate tax to 35 per cent from 50 per cent. Benefiting from the reductions will be hotels, hospitals, industries and mining firms.

"Any strain in ties between Jordan and Iraq will reflect immediately on business prospects and will wipe out all expected gains from the tax reductions," added the AFM broker.

Cheap dollar brings overseas tourists flocking to U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The cheap U.S. dollar has sent European and Japanese tourists flocking to the United States this year, but neighbouring Canadians and Mexicans are staying away because of weaker currencies, tourism experts say.

In U.S. dollar terms, however, spending is expected to at least match the \$78 billion left by foreign tourists last year, according to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration.

Last year, the United States had a \$22 billion tourist trade surplus, \$12 billion of it with Japan.

Some 43 million foreign tourists are expected to visit the United States this year, down 2.5 million from last year.

The shortfall is mainly due to fewer Canadian and Mexican visitors, who account for the bulk of tourists in the United States.

Canadian visits are down by nine per cent to 13.6 million, while the number of Mexicans is expected to fall 15 per cent to some 9.6 million in the wake of the crash of the peso which lost half its value against the dollar in late 1994.

"Overall tourist figures may be down, but in terms of dollars spent, 1995 should be excellent," according to U.S. Travel and Data Centre spokeswoman Shawn Flaherty.

The British, whose num-

bers are expected to be up two per cent to nearly three million, like the fast-food, theme parks, Florida and the west coast, according to tour operators who gathered here in May.

Germans, whose numbers are to grow five per cent to 1.8 million, like to drive and visit the national parks.

Italians, 546,000 of whom will visit, love to sightsee, while the French, 895,000 of whom are expected to travel here, enjoy outdoor activities.

The Japanese are keen on shopping. Some 4.4 million of them, up one per cent on last year, are expected to visit this year.

In fact shopping expenditures often generate more revenue than typical tourist expenditures such as sightseeing, accommodation and recreation, tourist specialists say.

"The U.S. continues to be a bargain and a lot of people go back with refrigerators and other big-ticket items, not to mention clothes, sporting goods and household appliances," according to Vicki Johnson, spokeswoman for the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration.

Last year just over four million Japanese visited. They stayed an average 8.2 nights and spent \$16.7 billion.

In comparison, nearly 15 million Canadians visited. They stayed an average 7.4

nights, but spent only \$7.4 billion.

Some 1.7 million Germans visited, staying an average 20 nights and spending \$5.1 billion.

The 863,000 French tourists who visited spent \$2.9 billion.

Todd Haenisch, a Kansas-based professor of tourism, said recent trends showed foreign tourists were increasingly people who had been here before.

"Some 76 per cent have been here before and 25 per

cent have been 10 times or more," he said.

As they return, foreigners look for new experiences, increasingly moving away from traditional big tourist hubs such as New York, Los Angeles and Florida in search of the "real" America, Mr. Haenisch said.

"Foreigners are looking more and more for scenery, national parks and freedom of travel," according to Brad Smith of Foremost West, a tourist association representing five of the western states.

ANNOUNCEMENT THE CENTRAL BANK OF JORDAN

The Central Bank of Jordan announces that, in conformity with the law of the Central Bank and the bylaw of the Issuance of Jordanian Currency No. (11) year 1995, a modified JD1 banknote will be put in circulation as from Saturday Aug. 26, 1995.

The specifications of the new note are completely the same as the note currently in circulation, except for the following modifications:

- The phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in Arabic has been added to the front of the note.
- The phrase "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" in English has been added to the back.
- The dates (both the Hijri and Gregorian) in Arabic have been placed to the right of the dates in English on the back of the note.
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Japan's Sugiyama upsets Martinez, Bradtke to reach semis

MAHWAH, New Jersey (R) — Ai Sugiyama of Japan advanced to the semifinals and Austrian Judith Wiesner and American Canada Rubin reached the quarterfinals of the \$150,000 Pathmark women's tennis tournament on Thursday.

Sugiyama, who upset top-seeded Conchita Martinez Wednesday night, rallied to beat Nicole Bradtke of Australia 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-3) Thursday afternoon.

"I felt that I might lose but I just kept going, running for everything and trying to cover the whole court," said the 19-year-old Sugiyama, who is ranked 63rd to Bradtke's 36. "She rallied to win from 2-4 deficits in each of the second and third sets."

Wiesner also was forced to three sets before putting away Lisa Raymond of the United States 6-2, 5-7, 7-5. The Austrian Fed Cup player is ranked 23rd, three places behind Raymond.

"I was finally able to close it out when I served with new balls in the last game," said Wiesner, who was broken on four previous attempts to serve out the match, twice in the second set and twice in the third.

Tatjana Jecmenica of Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, Monica Seles' hometown, pushed Rubin, ranked 16th in the world, to three sets before losing a 6-3, 2-6, 6-4 decision.

"I thought I played pretty good," said the 17-year-old Jecmenica. She only won the first and third sets on one break each time. The tournament was good practice for my first U.S. Open."

In the quarterfinals, fourth-ranked Jana Novotna



Conchita Martinez leans on her racket after missing a point (AFP photo)

Marianne Werdel Witmeyer in an all-American clash in day matches and seventh-seed Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria will play Wiesner at night.

Gazza hits it off with Cypriot "hooligans"

LARNACA (AFP) — Rangers star Paul Gascoigne banttered and drank beer with the leading "hooligans" of his Cypriot opponents Anorthosis after the Scots narrowly avoided embarrassment to reach the Champions League.

My contract says I can only play 20 minutes a game," quipped Gazza who came off early with groin injury.

The England international refused to compliment the man of the match for the Cypriots, the diminutive Bulgarian midfielder Ilian Kirakov, insisting on mispronouncing the name.

"He'd make a good seventh dwarf," the crocheted star told two supporters described by the Cypriot club officials as ringleaders of the hooligans, albeit reformed for the night.

Although he was being filmed by Scottish television during the 15-minute encounter outside the changing room Gascoigne refused to speak to journalists.

The fans meanwhile needed him on the astronomic fee Glasgow Rangers paid for his services.

"You're supposed to be worth millions and we paid just 40,000 (Cypriot pounds) for Kirakov," said one.

Rangers held on for a goalless draw against Cypriots Anorthosis Famagusta in the Antonis Papadopoulos stadium to give themselves a 1-0 aggregate preliminary round win after Gordon Durie's first-led goal.

Now the big-spending Scottish champions are through to the lucrative group stages and that will be a huge relief to manager Walter Smith after a night of tension in Cyprus.

Smith was without the injured Brian Laudrop and then lost 4.3 million pounds (\$6.41 million) club record buy Paul Gascoigne after 25 minutes with a groin injury.

They endured an intimidating atmosphere, an inconsistent Hungarian referee, László Vágner, and had goalkeeper Andy Goram to thank for a couple of inspired saves.

The result clinched a place in the elite for the second time in four years for high rollers Rangers.

The club is now guaranteed revenue of 5-10 million pounds, depending on how Rangers fare in their six games against the likes of Blackburn, Ajax, Juventus, Real Madrid or Borussia Dortmund with the draw due on Friday.

Smith gave a debut to 1.5 million pound Serbian defender Gordon Petric, a summer buy from Dundee United. He was in a three-man defence with Richard Gough and Alan McLaren.

In midfield, Charlie Miller and Stuart McCall were alongside Gascoigne with Gordon Durie up front alongside Mark Hateley.

Anorthosis made only one change from the side which lost 1-0 in Glasgow and the Antonis Papadopoulos stadium was a throbbing theatre of expectation pre-match with the ground looking well over its 9,500 capacity.

Rangers claimed a six-minute penalty when Miller tumbled under a challenge by Georgios Panayi but the Hungarian referee bottled out and penalised the Scot instead for diving.

Gascoigne departed after 25 minutes, signalling to the bench he had suffered what looked like a groin injury and he was a despondent figure as he went off to be replaced by Ian Durrant.

Andy Goram excelled himself with a 30th-minute save from the impressive Demetris Assiotis — although it was with his right boot.

Petric went close to a scoring debut with a 35-yard free-kick which swerved wide of the post after taking a deflection.

Rangers had David Robertson booked shortly after the break but they continued to make two fine chances for teenager Miller.

All eyes on Premier League's big money transfers

LONDON (AP) — The record big-money transfers of England's Premier League seem to be earning their keep.

Les Ferdinand and France's David Ginola have Newcastle unbeaten and buzzing.

Arsenal is humming along with its new stars David Platt and Dennis Bergkamp.

The start of the season has not been promising, however, for Liverpool's Stan Collymore.

Collymore, who came to the club in a British record 8.5-million pound (\$13.1 million) deal from Nottingham Forest, limped off with an ankle injury in a 1-0 loss earlier this week to Leeds and may be out of action for a few games.

Leeds is cashing on Tony Yeboah, a blooming superstar from Ghana who joined the club last season for 3.4 million pounds (\$5.2 million).

Yeboah and Ferdinand have been money in the bank with three goals in two matches to top the scoring tables.

The quick spurt by Ferdinand and Yeboah is reflected in the standings.

Newcastle and Leeds — joined by Wimbledon and Aston Villa — are atop the league with two wins in two matches.

Aston Villa plays at Leeds Saturday, which may

be the best of the day's nine Premier League matches. Wimbledon plays at Manchester United in another key game, with Newcastle at Sheffield Wednesday in Sunday's only Premier League encounter.

Newcastle paid Queens Park Rangers a 6-million-pound (\$9.2 million) transfer fee for Ferdinand.

season in a 2-0 win Wednesday over FA cup champions Everton, and Bergkamp assisted on the second.

"David still has some catching up to do with the rest of the lads in terms of match fitness. He is going to get better, fitter and sharper," manager Bruce Rioch said.

British Soccer Preview

Almost dwarfed by that kind of money is the 2.5-million pounds (\$3.9 million) they gave Paris St. Germain for Ginola. He hasn't scored yet but he's getting rave reviews.

One British tabloid called Ginola the "Cantona without the tantrums," a reference to countryman Eric Cantona of Manchester United, who is suspended until October for a kung-fu attack on a fan last season.

"I never become angry or mad... I just play football," Ginola said. "That's all I want to do in life."

Arsenal, tired of being dubbed England's most boring club, got platt for 4.55 million pounds (\$7.3 million) from Italy's Sampdoria and Dutchman Bergkamp from Inter Milan for 7.5 million pounds (\$11.6 million).

England captain Platt scored his first goal of the

Arsenal, with a win and a draw in hand, plays Saturday at Coventry.

After a disappointing 3-1 season-opening loss to Aston Villa, Manchester United came back mid-week to beat West Ham 2-1. Injured Andy Cole, out of action for four months with Shin Splints, returned in the second half against West Ham and is expected to start on Saturday against Wimbledon at Old Trafford.

Dutch master Ruud Geil, a free transfer from Sampdoria, will lead Chelsea (two scoreless draws in two games) against Middlesbrough.

Middlesbrough will be playing its first match in a new 16-million pound (\$24.6 million), 30,000-seat stadium. It's billed as the biggest stadium to be built in England since World War II.

Portugal's Supercup goes to 3rd match

OPORTO, Portugal (R) — Portuguese champions Porto and Cup holders Sporting will have to meet again next month to decide the 1995 Supercup after battling to a second draw.

Porto took the lead twice before their home crowd but eventually had to settle for a 2-2 draw despite Sporting being reduced to 10 men for the last few minutes after goalkeeper Paolo Costinha was sent off.

The two teams, who drew 0-0 at Sporting, will meet again on September 20 at a neutral ground when the cup will be decided on penalties if necessary.

Porto, without English manager Bobby Robson who is recovering in London from surgery, went ahead in the 18th minute when a shot striker Domingos Oliveira bounced off the right post into the back of Sporting's keeper Costinha and into the net.

Moroccan defender Noureddine Naybet equalised for Sporting in the 42nd minute.

Oliveira, who also scored twice in last Sunday's 2-1 win over Sporting in the opening round of the league, put Porto back in front with a 53rd minute penalty after Sporting's captain Oceano Cruz brought down Porto defender Jose Carlos.

In the 74th minute Sporting hit back again when newly signed Ivorian striker Ahmad Quattara, in a superb solo effort, rounded Porto keeper Vitor Baia to slip the ball home.

In the 82nd minute, Sporting were reduced to 10 men when Costinha, who had not previously been cautioned, was sent off for a foul on Porto's Domingos following a corner.

Midfielder Oceano Cruz took over in goal but only had to make one save from a long-range effort by Oliveira.

World University Games Americans win four golds; Jacob becomes double gold medallist

FUKUOKA, Japan (AP) — Lisa Jacob became the World University Games' first double gold medallist Friday, leading a 1-2 American finish in women's 200-metre freestyle swimming.

Americans won four of the day's six races, and their men's 4x200-metre relay quartet set one of the day's two games records.

P-enelope Heyns of South Africa, a student at the University of Nebraska, broke a games record in qualifying and then won the women's 200-metre breaststroke at a somewhat slower pace.

Christian Pieper of Germany was .09 second off the games mark in winning the men's 800-metre freestyle.

"I'm shocked. I rarely swim the 800 and I didn't even know who my rivals were," Pieper said. "It was about 9 seconds better than my personal best."

Stanford teammates Jacob and Sarah Anderson, both members of the U.S. gold medal 4x200-metre freestyle relay squad, finished 1-2 in the 200. Jacob won in 2 minutes, 2.03 seconds. Anderson finished in 2:03.22 and Japan's Naoko Imoto was third in 2:03.86.

"It was a lot more difficult today than I thought," Jacob said.

In the previous night's relay, "it was easier with teammates to pull you along and give you inspiration," said Jacob. "I'm a little tired. But I'm happy with my time."

The men's relay quartet won in 7:17.83, slashing 2.5 seconds off the games mark of 7:20.34 set by another American quartet in 1985. France was second in 7:30.66 and Japan third in 7:31.02.

Josh Davis of Texas, Daniel Kanner of Stanford, Chris Rumley of Michigan and Bradley Schumacher of Pacific swam for the Americans.

In the day's closest race, American Thomas Malchow of Michigan won the men's 200 butterfly in 2:00.78. Alexander Gourgouraki of Russia and American Mike Merrill of Southern California

both were timed in 2:00.87, but Gourgouraki was awarded second place.

"That's when I was happy I had the longest arms," said the 6-foot, 6-inch (1.98-centimetre) Malchow.

The 400-metre individual medley victory by Ian Mull was a repeat of the auburn swimmer's 1993 games triumph. He won in 4:21.41, with American teammate Andrew Potts of Michigan third in 4:25.73. Japan's Tatsuya Kinugasa won the silver in 4:24.85.

"The U.S. crowd got me going," Mull said. Heyns slashed more than three seconds off the games record, qualifying in 2:26.98. Tania Bogomilova of Bulgaria had set the old mark of 2:30.30 in 1985.

But in the final, she had to settle for 2:28.44, still well ahead of the 2:31.66 of silver medallist Nadine Neumann of Australia. Japan's Kyoko Kasuya was third in 2:31.85.

"This morning I was surprised to do so well so I'm a little disappointed tonight," said Heyns, the silver medallist at 200 metres and gold medallist at 100 metres in the Pan Pacific meet earlier this month. "I've been working on the 100," she added.

Pieper's winning 8:04.89 in the 800 was just short of the games mark of 8:04.80 set by Canada's Turlough O'Hare in 1993. Luiz Eduardo Lima of Brazil took silver in 8:06.01, with Japan's Hisato third in 8:07.82.

University games-brifts

* Gymnastics proved to be the most popular sport with Fukuoka's spectators Thursday, the first full day of World University Games competition. Organisers said 8,527 people watched the men's team competition, which featured Vitali Scherbo of Belarus, a world champion in some specialties. Japan won the team gold medal.

* At Kasuga Park Field, site of three soccer games including host Japan's 1-1 draw with Canada, 5,633 turned out.

* Total attendance for all the day's events in eight sports was 40,895.

* The U.S. tennis players recovered from a surprise — the court surface and advanced through their early University Games singles matches. The surface is artificial grass, with sun used to adjust the pace.

* "The U.S. players were not expecting that kind of surface. It is much slicker than play," said David Caldwell of North Carolina, who reached the third round with victories Thursday and Friday.

* Caldwell beat Peter David of Slovakia 6-4, 6-1 and Luis Uribe of Mexico 4-6, 6-1, 6-3.

* Paul Goldstein of Stanford also advanced, beating Mana Gintota of Sri Lanka 6-0, 6-1 and Nicholas Adams of Britain 6-4, 6-2.

* In women's singles, Jane Chi of UCLA beat Nawal Jeha of Sudan 6-1, 6-0 and Olga Ivanova of Russia 6-3, 6-3 in her first two matches.

* The top seeds also advanced easily. After first-round byes, men's No. 1 Lee Hyung-Taik of South Korea beat Singapore's Evan Woo 6-1, 6-0, and women's No. 1 Wang Shi-Ting of Taiwan, a regular on the pro tour, defeated Mexico's Yolanda Rodriguez 6-3, 6-0.

* China's senior women's basketball team ranked No. 2 in the world, so Canada had "a bit of fear" going into its opening game at the University Games Thursday, said head coach Claire Mitton.

But Canada came out a 91-61 winner and, said Mitton, "I'm thrilled."

Joy McNichol led the scoring with 30 points on 70 per cent shooting.



Robert Allen of Canada drives down the court tournament in Argentina. The top placing as Esteban de la Fuente of Argentina attempts teams of the touring will play in the 1996 to defend during the Cup of the America's Olympics in Atlanta (AFP photo)

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♦ K J 7 6
♣ K 7 6

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♥ 8 6 4
♦ 10 9 8 5
♣ A J 10 2

EAST
♠ 10 8 7 4
♥ Q J 10 7 2
♦ Q 8 6
♣ A 8 5 3

SOUTH
♠ A 8 6
♥ A 8 7 3
♦ A 5 4
♣ A 9 4

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1NT Pass Pass 3NT Pass

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Mastering the techniques of card play is only half the battle. To be a winning player you must learn not only which to apply, but when to employ them.

Suppose you hold the South hand. While four aces do not make for an ideal one-trump opening, especially with poor intermediates, nothing else appeals and you reach three no trump in quick time. West leads the queen of clubs. Should you hold up at trick one?

With two stoppers and a combined six clubs in the hand, the Rule of Seven says no, and there is a more compelling reason here not to even if the Rule said otherwise. You cannot afford to lose a club

trick and have the opponents shift to hearts, where you have only one stopper. So win in hand with the ace.

Next problem is how to handle the diamonds. Do you cash the ace and king as a safety play, or do you take the finesse? The answer is that you do not know — yet.

The number of tricks you need in diamonds depends on how many spade tricks are available. If four tricks diamond tricks are necessary, 3-3 split. If only three will do, you can afford the safety play.

Therefore, before you tackle the diamonds lead a spade to the jack. When that wins, you need only three tricks from the diamond suit. The best way to get them is to cash the king and ace and, if the queen does not drop, lead a diamond toward the jack. That assures a 3-3, if the queen is doubleton, or if guarded any number of times. Well played.

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Seles gets easier draw on paper than Graf

NEW YORK (AP) — All it took was a quick look at Thursday's draw for the U.S. Open to make Monica Seles the favourite to win the women's title, even if it is her first Grand Slam event in more than 2½ years.

The two-time champion, who last played for a major title when she won the Australian Open a few months before she was stabbed, drew a much smoother path to the final than top-seeded Steffi Graf and defending champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the U.S. Open starting next week.

"The way the draw shapes up, and the way she played last week in winning the Canadian, I'd pick Monica right now," Pam Shriver said. "There are a few players who could give her trouble before the final, but she sure has it easier than Steffi and the players in the top half."

Bullie Jean King agreed with Shriver, echoing the consensus of virtually everyone at the draw. "Monica couldn't have asked for a better draw," King said. "Steffi couldn't have gotten a tougher one. But it'll come down to who's healthier, and just maybe there will be some surprises."

Graf's draw is full of traps from the first round on. She begins against Amanda Coetzer, who beat her in the first round last week in the Canadian Open. Also lurking in that 16th of the draw are Nathalie Tauziat, Chanda Rubin and Helena Sukova.

If Graf, who has been preoccupied with tax evasion charges against her father, gets past that group, she could face Australian Open champion Mary Pierce in the quarters and, perhaps, No. 3 Sanchez Vicario in the semis. Sanchez Vicario, who beat Graf in last year's final, should have little trouble in the early rounds. She's seeded to meet Mary Joe Fernandez in the fourth round and Magdalena Maleeva in the quarters.

Seles, co-ranked No. 1 by the WTA but seeded No. 2, has a breeze by comparison. A week after starting her comeback by winning in Canada, Seles plays in the first round against Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania. The most dangerous players Seles could face before the quarters are Marianne Werdel Wimmer in the third round and Lori McNeil in the fourth round. Seles is then seeded to face Jana Novotna in the quarters and No. 4 Conchita Martinez in the semis.

"Jana Novotna is always a dangerous player," Shriver said. "But can she win the big one — ever? I doubt it here."

Men's top seed Andre Agassi and defending champion also drew a tough first-round opponent in Bryan Shelton, with the winner perhaps facing former two-time champion Stefan Edberg in the third round.

"That's not an easy start for Andre," Davis Cup captain Tom Gullikson said, "but he's playing unbelievable tennis on hard courts this summer. He has a 20 match winning streak. Andre would have to be the favourite to win again."

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European Swimming Championships

Van Almsick wins 400 freestyle; Popov wins 100 again

VIENNA (AP) — Germany's Franz Van Almsick started a new chapter in her career by winning two more gold medals at the European Swimming Championships Thursday.

She won her first major title in a distance race as she took the 400-metre freestyle in the fastest time of the year.

Then she came back 45 minutes later to gain her fourth gold of this year's meet when she led off the German 400 freestyle relay team.

Alexander Popov of Russia retained his unofficial title as the fastest man in the water with his third consecutive 100-metre freestyle European Crown.

Mette Jacobsen of Denmark won the women's 100 backstroke and Russian Vladimir Selkov took the men's 200.

Van Almsick, better known for the shorter races, where she won six gold medals at the 1993 competition, captured the 400 in 4 minutes 37.57 seconds. She started fast, passing the first 100 metres in 58.99. She had to push to keep the pace in the final 50 from a fast-closing

Carl Geurts of Netherlands, second in 4:13.44.

"I knew I would need a fast pace at the beginning," Van Almsick said. "The last 100 was very hard."

Third was Irene Dalby of Norway, the 1991 champion, in 4:13.44.

Germany's Julia Jung, a 15-year-old who beat Van Almsick at the German championships, was sixth in 4:15.94, almost seven seconds slower than the 4:09.24, the previous season's best.

Van Almsick has seen both extremes this championship. On Tuesday she took the 100 freestyle and anchored the 800 relay.

On Wednesday she failed to qualify for the main final but had the fastest time in the consolation race, setting a meet record in the 200 freestyle in 1:57.71.

She has a rest day on Friday and has the medley relay on Saturday and the 50 freestyle on Sunday.

Popov won the 100 in 49.10 seconds, far off his world record of 48.21.

"I'm not totally fit now," Popov said. "I became sick when I arrived in Vienna and



Mette Jacobsen of Denmark smiles happily after winning the women's 100m backstroke final at the European Swimming Championships (AFP photo)

had a high temperature."

The 23-year-old from Volgograd now trains in Canberra, Australia and is unbeaten at this distance since 1991.

Germans Torsten Spanneberg and Bjorn Zikarsky were second and third behind Popov in 49.67 and 50.23.

Jacobsen took the 100 backstroke title in 1:02.46. Two-time champion, Krisztina Egerszegi of Hungary, decided to bypass this event to concentrate on the individual medley and the 200 backstroke race.

Cathleen Rund of Germany took second behind Jacobsen, 1:02.91 with favourite Nina Zhyanovskaya of Russia third, 1:03.06.

Selkov took the 200 backstroke in 1:08.48 over Romanian Nicolae Butacu, 1:09.96 and Briton Adam Ruckwood, 2:00.16.

Van Almsick opened the German relay victory with a split of 55.08, faster than her individual 100 two nights ear-

lier. The total time was 3:45.21 with Britain third, 3:43.22. Sweden was second, 3:46.89.

MEDAL TABLE

The medal table after Thursday's events at the 22nd European Swimming Championships:

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Russia	11	2	4	17
Germany	9	8	4	21
Hungary	2	1	0	3
Finland	2	0	1	3
Belgium	2	0	0	2
Netherlands	1	3	0	4
Denmark	1	1	1	3
Sweden	0	5	0	5
France	0	3	1	4
Ukraine	0	2	1	3
Poland	0	1	2	3
Romania	0	1	0	1
Ireland	0	1	0	1
Italy	0	0	6	6
Britain	0	0	5	5
Belarus	0	0	1	1
Czech Republic	0	0	1	1
Greece	0	0	1	1
Norway	0	0	1	1



Winner of the men's 200 metre backstroke final, Vladimir Selkov of Russia (centre) poses with second placed Nicolae Butacu of Romania (right) and third placed Briton Adam Ruckwood (left) after receiving their medals at the European Swimming Championships (AFP photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Kanchelskis completes Everton move

LIVERPOOL (AFP) — After a bitter contract dispute, Russian winger Andrei Kanchelskis finally completed his five million pound (eight million dollar) move to Everton, his former club Manchester United confirmed on Friday. The Russian star was signed by the Merseysiders four weeks ago but the transfer appeared to collapse when United aborted the deal having failed to reach a compromise with his former club Shakhtar Donetsk over a sell-on clause. United recalled the 26-year-old, who claimed he could never play for manager Alex Ferguson again, but Kanchelskis continued to train with Everton.

Haining wins record 3rd gold

TAMPERE, Finland (R) — Reigning champion Peter Haining won the world lightweight sculling title for a record third time on Friday but collapsed with the effort and had to be lifted out of the boat. Haining, 32, led all the way, fighting off a strong push from Tomas Kacovsky of the Czech Republic in the last 150 metres. Both raised their rate to 37 in the final 10 strokes but Haining held on to win by just under a length. After crossing the line, Haining collapsed in his boat. Officials in a rescue launch appeared to give him smelling salts and then lifted him out. He was taken to an ambulance and given oxygen but officials said his condition was not serious and he did not need to go to hospital. The medal ceremony was held without him.

Chargers' coach to have surgery

SAN DIEGO (AP) — San Diego Chargers coach Bobby Ross was scheduled to undergo surgery Thursday night to relieve pressure from scar tissue that was pinching down on his intestines and causing pain. Team spokesman Bill Johnston said Ross could remain hospitalized for 4-to-5 days, meaning he will miss the National Football League exhibition finale against the St. Louis Rams. The ailment comes at a critical time for the Chargers. Last Saturday's game at Houston was cancelled due to poor turf conditions at the stadium, preventing the coaches from evaluating players. The final roster cutdown comes Sunday, followed by preparation for the season opener at Oakland a week from Sunday. Johnston said scar tissue from an appendectomy performed on Ross some 40 years ago was pinching down where the small and large intestines meet. Doctors tried to manipulate it by having Ross move around, but X-rays taken late Thursday afternoon showed that surgery was necessary, Johnston said.

Herbert crash interrupts practice

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium (R) — Briton Johnny Herbert escaped serious injury on Friday when he crashed heavily in his Benetton during the opening, rain-hit free practice session for Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix motor race.

Herbert lost control of his car on the run uphill towards La Source Hairpin. He crashed into the pit wall, smashing the nose off his car, and then spun three times along the outside barrier before coming to a halt.

Herbert sat motionless in the wrecked car for a minute before being reached by the track marshalls who helped him to climb out of the cockpit.

He was taken by ambulance to the circuit medical centre and the session was halted for 15 minutes.

Johnson, Torrence go for gold

BRUSSELS (AP) — Michael Johnson and Gwen Torrence won five gold medals between them at the World Championships. They line up for more gold at the Van Damme Memorial.

The Grand Prix event is the third of the Golden four meets, offering 20 kilograms of gold, or a split of it, to any athlete that can win his event at Oslo, Zurich, Brussels and Berlin.

Apart from the two American multiple world champions, Britain's Linford Christie, German Javelin thrower Raymond Hecht, 5,000-metre world champion Sonia O'Sullivan and javelin world champion Natalja Schenkolenko of Belarus still have a shot at a sweep.

Torrence has another grudge match against rival Merlene Ottey in the 200, the event in which the American was stripped of gold at the World Championships because of a lane violation.

Ottey was given gold instead and accused Torrence

of "cheating." Their rivalry has been laced with bitterness since. Torrence outdueled Ottey last week, the second of the Golden four meets.

"Did you see how I was tracing the middle of the lane," in Zurich, the 100-metre and 400 relay world champion joked.

Johnson hardly has been involved in any rivalry this year, such was his domination in the 200 and 400. On top of that, he won a third gold in the 1,600 relay, making him the most successful athlete of the World Championships.

Fellow-American Butch Reynolds has been a distant second most of the time in the 400, and it is tough to see any changes at the Van Damme.

Christie, the reigning Olympic, European and Commonwealth 100 champion, is still without gold this year, after a hamstringing undid him at the World Cham-

pionships early this month. But he came back with a vengeance in Zurich last week, beating the newly crowned world champion Donovan Bailey of Canada.

After announcing his retirement for the end of the year, he wants to out on top.

If one athlete maintains a perfect Golden four record, it would earn him some \$230,000 in gold.

For those who have missed out on such perfection, there is always a world record.

Kenyan Moses Kiptanui ran the first sub-8 minute steeplechase ever at Zurich and will seek to improve on his record in Brussels.

Nouredine Morceli, who reigns supreme over the middle distance, wants to improve his 3,000 world mark. The Heysel Stadium never was kind to world record attempts. Sebastian Coe was the only one to improve a world record here, the mile in 1981.

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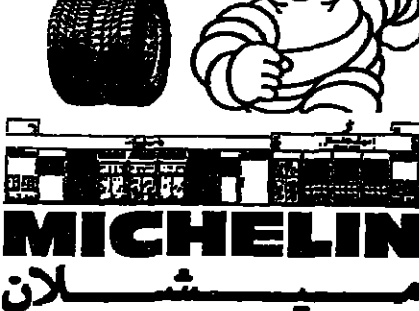


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German minister ends visit today after successful talks

Bonn to offer DM 140 million every year for regional projects to benefit partners in peace

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — German Minister of Economic Cooperation Carl-Dieter Spranger ends a visit to Jordan on Saturday after talks with Jordanian leaders that were described as highly successful and positive.

The highlight of Mr. Spranger's four-day visit was his announcement that the German government was rechanneling 140 million marks (about JD 70 million) for regional projects in the Middle East to benefit the parties involved in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

The amount represents the aid that Germany used to give to Israel every year since 1966 as assistance to a developing country, but the Jewish state will no longer qualify for its since its per capita income is expected to rise over \$15,000 in 1995, Mr. Spranger told a press conference on Thursday.

The assistance, which will be endorsed in the federal government budget in November, will be available throughout 1996 for projects that would benefit all parties in the Middle East peace process. But it is unlikely that Syria and Lebanon could be among its immediate beneficiaries since they have yet to join the multilateral phase of the peace process where regional economic cooperation and joint projects are discussed.

It is too early to determine how much Jordan stood to benefit from the assistance, but given the advanced stage of blue prints for regional projects and presentations at the Middle East and North Africa economic summit to be held in Amman in October, it is a safe bet that the aid could be allocated in early 1996.

The channelling of the aid will be done in coordination with Israel, which could also benefit from the assistance since it would be used for projects of common benefits to all, the German minister noted.

Mr. Spranger held separate talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Finance Minister Basel Jarrah, Planning Minister Rima Khalaf and Water and Irrigation Minister Saleh Irsheidat. In addition, he also met with several other members of the cabinet at an informal lunch.

Mr. Spranger told the press conference that Germany, which holds about 500 million marks (about \$250 million) of Jordan's foreign debts, was seeking ways to help the Kingdom. The minister noted that his country had extended about \$50 million in debt relief to Jordan in 1994, and said Germany was working in coordination with the Paris Club of creditor governments to help Jordan in the context of debt rescheduling. "We are in a continuous process" of seeking to help Jordan "bilaterally and multilaterally," the minister said.

Germany also remains "open" to considering ideas of debt swaps, he said. But he did not specify any figures.

In response to a question on potential German investment in Jordan, the minister said as long as businessmen were assured of stability and security as well as liberal economic laws and returns, investments would be coming to Jordan and the region.

At the same time, he said in an implicit reference to violence against the Israeli-



Carl-Dieter Spranger

Palestinian peace negotiations, it was the responsibility of those in positions of influence and decision-making not to give any ground to those who are trying to wreck the peace process.

In a broader context, the minister paid tribute to the economic performance of Jordan and the Kingdom's success in reducing its foreign debts from more than \$8 billion in 1988 to \$5.6 billion in 1994 and in maintaining inflation around four per cent.

The economic policies followed by the Jordanian government have been very successful and as long as they continue (in the same path) there would be investments coming to the country, he said.

On Friday, Mr. Spranger visited Petra and stone conservation projects financed by the German government under way there. He did not have any official meetings after his press conference on Thursday, the German embassy said.

The German minister began his current Middle East visit in Israel. He also met with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Gaza and visited German-funded

projects in Jericho.

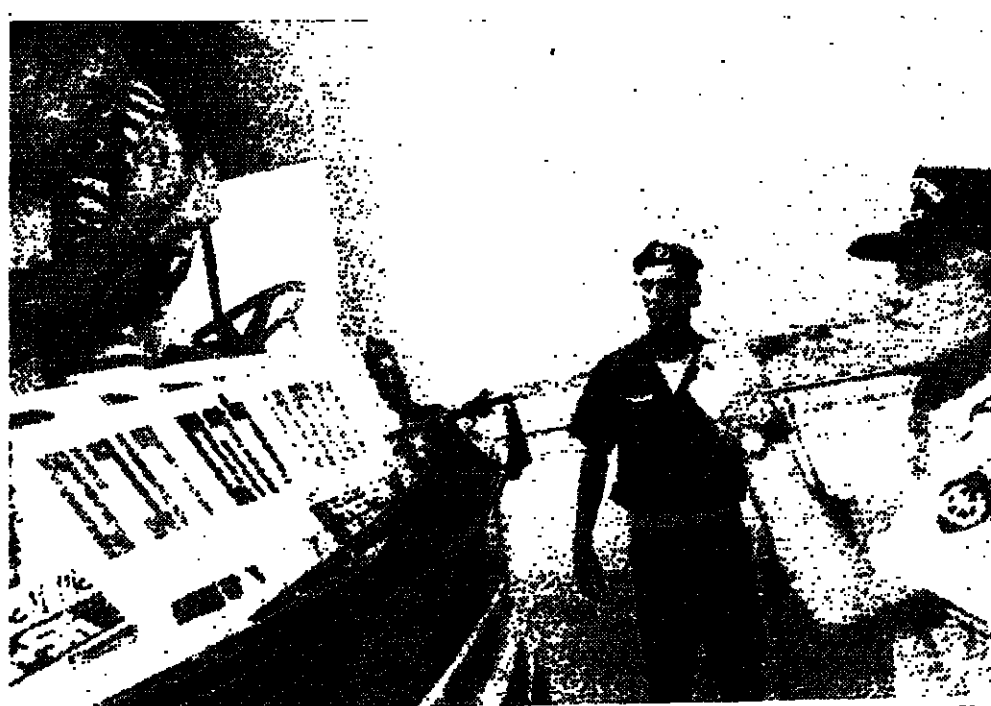
In Syria, he is expected to hold talks with President Hafez Al Assad and other Syrian leaders and also visit Aleppo, where Germany is funding several development projects.

The minister's visit to Jordan "was very successful, particularly for Jordan," said a German embassy spokeswoman, pointing out to the announcement of rechanneling of 140 million marks.

"It is too early to determine which projects will be identified for the assistance, but the aid falls in line with the German policy of helping the peace process through extending help to the parties involved and for projects that benefit all of them," added the spokeswoman.

In his press conference, Mr. Spranger reaffirmed Germany's commitment to helping Jordan and Israel execute projects stipulated in the Oct. 26 peace treaty signed by the two countries. That was seen as a reference to a pledge made by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl during a visit to Jordan earlier this year that Germany, along with its fellow members of the European Union, was ready to consider financing water projects included in the treaty after studies establish the feasibility of the projects.

Jordan represents the highest per capita recipient of German aid, which totalled two billion marks since the 1960s. German aid for Jordan for 1995 is 42 million marks (about JD 21 million). In addition, Germany contributes 28 per cent of the budget of the European Union, which has a separate aid programme for Jordan and other countries.



Israeli police stop a bus with right-wing activists against the Israeli-Palestinian self-rule accord from entering the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway on Thursday (AFP photo)

Israel, PLO report major progress in self-rule talks

Soldiers kill 2 Palestinians in Hebron

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Major progress has been made in the latest round of negotiations to extend autonomy across the West Bank, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) announced Friday, but obstacles remain in a full agreement.

The spread of autonomy involves army redeployment outside Palestinian areas of the West Bank, transfer of civilian powers and elections to an autonomy council and is already 13 months behind schedule.

In return, Israel reorganised Palestinian rights to water sources on the West Bank, Agriculture Minister Yaakov Tsur said.

Meanwhile Israeli forces killed two Hamas militants in a gunfight after they trapped them in a house in the West Bank town of Hebron on Friday, Palestinians and the Israeli army said.

After carting off the bodies, soldiers razed the house to the ground with bulldozers, witnesses said.

Major General Ian Biran told Israeli Radio: "During initiated searches the Cherry unit carried out a model mission... there was an exchange of fire that ended with the killing of the two..."

The Hebron clash came two days after Israel said it had captured many but not all members of a West Bank Hamas network responsible for a bus bombing in Jerusalem that killed five people and a similar attack near Tel Aviv in July.

Gen. Biran said the two men killed in Hebron — Ibrahim Al Qawasm and Nader Shehadeh — were not part of the bomber group but attached to a different Hamas unit.

"I want to repeat and emphasise that this war has not ended, is not complete, and it is a total war," Gen. Biran added.

Several years ago there were media reports the army undercover Cherry unit acted as an execution squad. The transfer of powers involves 40 spheres and the two

sides said they have now reached agreement over about 25 spheres, but did not specify.

The PLO agreed Thursday to set aside the key issue of water sharing with Israel until final negotiations next year, so clearing one of the major hurdles to a full accord to spread self-rule, officials said.

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Several years ago there were media reports the army undercover Cherry unit acted as an execution squad. The transfer of powers involves 40 spheres and the two

army denied the reports. PLO head Yasser Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said the PLO would ask Israel for an explanation. He added, "The Palestinian Authority does not accept in principle physical liquidation and using violence before ascertaining the facts."

Ribhi Sultan, the owner of the house where the clash occurred, said that before dawn two gunmen burst into his home. Soldiers surrounded the building, Mr. Sultan and his family fled.

There was an exchange of gunfire between the militants and troops. Hundreds of soldiers took up positions on rooftops in the area. Security sources said a curfew was imposed on Hebron.

Soldiers ordered Mr. Sultan back into the house when the shooting stopped. "By my hand I took the bodies out of my home, then they demolished the house," Mr. Sultan, who denied he knew the dead guerrillas, told Reuters.

After troops removed the bodies from the site, journalists were allowed to approach the building. Blood and bits of brain could be seen at the entrance. Later bulldozers moved in and knocked down the house, in the process churning up about a third of a hectare of land planted with trees.

Israeli troops hunting guerrillas routinely use bulldozers and even rockets to destroy buildings in which they believe wanted Palestinians are hiding.

Hamas said Friday its master bomb-maker Yahya Ayyash, who is sought by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, was outside the Gaza Strip.

"Everybody should rest assured that Yahya Ayyash is not at present in Gaza at all," Hamas said in a statement.

COLUMN

Hagman awake, recovering after liver transplant

LOS ANGELES (AP) — U.S. actor Larry Hagman was fully awake a day after receiving a new liver in a 15-hour operation. "He had a smile on his face and was the Larry Hagman we know," Dr. Leonard Makowka, director of the liver transplant programme at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre, said. The former Dallas star was still listed in critical condition but had shown no complications from the surgery and his new liver was working, Dr. Makowka and hospital spokesman Ron Wise said. Mr. Wise said the critical condition listing is typical for patients undergoing such an operation. Hagman, 63, who played J.R. Ewing on the hit nighttime soap Dallas, had advanced cirrhosis of the liver, which he blamed on years of heavy drinking. He was placed on a national waiting list on July 19 after a malignant tumour was found on his liver.

U.K. papers vow to leave Prince William alone

LONDON (R) — Editors of Britain's sensation-loving tabloid newspapers promised to heed an official warning and leave Prince William alone when he starts at one of Britain's most exclusive schools next month. The newspapers made their vows after the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Lord Wakeham, told them the 13-year-old future king was not a football star or a famous actor and should be allowed to grow up without the constant intrusion of reporters and photographers. In a speech at the watchdog commission's offices in Fleet Street, until recently the heart of Britain's newspaper industry, he said: "Prince William must be allowed to run, walk, study and play at Eton free from the fear of prying cameras. He must be allowed to make mistakes and learn the way we all do without our reading consistently of his successes and failures in the columns of our newspapers," Lord Wakeham, a former Conservative cabinet minister, said. The response was immediate. "The Sun is happy to make this public pledge: We will not publish anything which may harm Prince William during his days at Eton," the paper said. Piers Morgan, editor of the Sun's Sunday supplement, the mass-selling News Of The World, told the Sun: "Our readers share the country's fascination in the development of a young man who will one day be our king. I am sure that we and other newspapers will be able to record aspects of that development in a responsible manner."

Wanted Filipino actor surrenders to police

MANILA (R) — Fugitive Filipino actor Robin Padilla surrendered to police Friday after eluding arrest for nearly a month and said he was ready to start his 21-year jail term on gun-possession charges. "I'm ready," Padilla, who became famous portraying disturbed tough guys with golden hearts in his film roles, told reporters. Tears filled his eyes. The actor was convicted of illegal possession of firearms by a court in Angeles City north of Manila last year and his appeals had been rejected.

Only half of China's women decide whom they marry

BEIJING (R) — Fewer than half of China's women have complete say in who they marry, a survey published in China's major newspaper Friday said. The survey, conducted by the state China Central Television Co. in May, showed 47.6 per cent of 10,061 female respondents had the power to decide entirely who they marry, the newspaper said. For centuries, China's women had no say in their marriages. Parents and matchmakers decided the fate of women often without them seeing their future grooms on the basis of family alliances, wealth and status. The survey showed that 31.5 per cent of today's women consult their parents on whom they plan to marry.

4 killed in Lebanon fighting

MARJAYOUN (AP) — At least three guerrillas and a pro-Israeli militiaman of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) were killed in South Lebanon Friday as Israeli troops and helicopter gunships fought running battles with guerrillas, security sources reported.

The violence capped a week of escalating hostilities in the region in which 12 people have been killed. That raised the overall casualty toll in the last active warfront in the Arab-Israeli conflict this year to 126 killed and 287 wounded.

The thunder of tank, artillery, mortar and rocket fire reverberated across South Lebanon beginning late Thursday night as Israeli forces fought guerrillas of Hizbollah at several places along the fringes of the border strip Israel has occupied. The upsurge in hostilities came after Israeli soldiers ambushed infiltrating guerrillas Thursday night at Jabal Abu Rashid on the edge of the zone's eastern sector.

Heavy fighting with rocket-propelled grenades and mortars broke out, the security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Three guerrillas were killed and an Israeli soldier was wounded, they reported.

Defector says Saddam will be toppled soon

CAIRO (Agencies) — A senior Iraqi defector said in interviews published on Friday he planned to oust his father-in-law President Saddam Hussein soon and asked Arabs to help Iraqis in their drive to get rid of him.

Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel Hassan — the mastermind of Iraq's military industries and husband of president Saddam's daughter — told the London-based Asharq Al Awsat and Al Hayat newspapers that he was actively working for a change of power in Baghdad.

He described the current government as corrupt and ruthless.

"The work against the regime will be through various aspects which we cannot declare. We have a strong base among the special guards, the army and society. Now there is a flurry of urgent preparations by commanders and senior officers. They're awaiting the second to change this regime," Gen. Hassan told Al Hayat.

Asked if President Saddam's ousting was imminent, he said: "God willing, definitely it will be soon, and on this we depend on the support of the Iraqi society. We strongly need the (support) of our Arab brothers although we know the issue relates directly to Iraq."

Gen. Hassan, who defected to Jordan on Aug. 8, said army commanders were waiting for the right moment to pounce and he was planning to go to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to ask for support for an attempt to overthrow President Saddam.

He said there were "advanced preparations among commanders and senior officers who are waiting for the right moment to change."

He denied having personal political ambitions but said he wanted to help save his country.

"I am not seeking power but I have to do something to save the Iraqis, to stop the killings and repression in my country. I want to save Iraq," he said.

Gen. Hassan, Iraq's for-

mer industry minister, said President Saddam had planned to boycott Jordan, its main gateway to the outside world, after the lifting of international sanctions.

He also alleged Iraq had planned to attack Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on Aug. 31, until he scuppered the plans by defecting.

"The Iraqi president gave orders to the officers and troops to steal and pillage systematically in the new invasion of Kuwait," he said. He added President Saddam had planned to invade the emirate in October 1994 when he amassed troops near the border until U.S.-led coalition forces were rushed to the area.

Gen. Hassan, who left Baghdad with his brother and their wives, both daughters of the president, denied he had left Iraq because of a family quarrel.

"It's a much more important affair than that. It's about saving the country," he told Asharq Al Awsat, adding he was planning a peaceful change of government in Baghdad and would work with other opposition groups.

He told Al Hayat that President Saddam's eldest son, Uday, was trying to depose his father and grab power but the president remained in control.

He also denied charges by Iraqi opposition groups that he had been responsible for attacking Shiite Muslim shrines during revolt in the holy city of Karbala in Iraq at the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

Gen. Hassan said he would like to visit Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to explain the situation and "seek their help" in ousting President Saddam. He denied collaborating with Washington to that effect.

"But we will hold a dialogue with our Arab brothers to oust the regime. We will hold meetings with international parties and explain our position in details."

The defector said the decision to invade Kuwait and torch its oil wells at the end of the Iraqi occupation in 1991

was taken by President Saddam.

"We were not the ones who took that bad decision, which was taken by Saddam personally. We had to bear a part of executing that decision and we did not have an opportunity at that time to resist it," he said.

Iraq was holding Kuwaiti prisoners from the 1990-1991 Gulf war and said he would reveal information "when the time comes."

But in the Al Qabas interview, the defector, asked if he knew whether Iraq was still holding Kuwaitis, said he was not "now directly connected" to this issue.

He reiterated President Saddam had provisionally planned the purported new attack on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for Aug. 31, 1995.

He said this would have happened if international weapons inspectors had not by that date declared Iraq dismantled its weapons of mass destruction.

Since Gen. Hassan's defection, Iraq has stepped up compliance with the U.N. disarmament inspectors, U.N. spokesmen say. They say the Iraqi government has stopped speaking in terms of ultimatums and deadlines.

Gen. Hassan said Baghdad "was not ready to do that before we left. They felt threatened after our departure and they're trying to please the international forces because they know there is a dangerous trend directed to changing them."

"The regime has hidden military information believing that Iraq could go into war again. The intention was clear which is to go into Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the second Gulf war. It wanted to seize Saudi and Kuwaiti oil. It hoped to control all the Arab World and to have Iraq as a great power in the world."

He said Baghdad had refused to disclose information to the U.N. on its nuclear, germ, chemical programmes to lift the sanctions although "all these programmes had been destroyed."

Al Castello

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